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CONTENTS

THE SHAPE OF THINGS 497
EDITORIALS:
LIBERTY AND TEAR GAS 500
THE AIR DISASTERS 500
LABOR AT SEA 501
MONGOLIA—RED OR WHITE? 502
WASHINGTON WEEKLY by Paul W. Ward 503
"GERMANY—A WINTER'S TALE" by Lion Feuchtwanger 505
CONFLICT IN OUTER MONGOLIA by T. A. Bisson 507
AFTER EPIC IN CALIFORNIA by Lillian Symes 509
ON BEING CONTEMPORARY by William Troy 511
ISSUES AND MEN by Oswald Garrison Villard 513
BROUN'S PAGE 514
BOOKS AND THE ARTS:
. . . BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT I LIKE by Joseph Wood Krutch 517
THE FLOWERING by Charles Hudeburg 518
GOVERNMENT IN THE U. S. S. R. by Abram L. Harris 518
MARVELOUS BOY by Louis Kronenberger 520
CRITICISM BY EXCLAMATION by Mark Van Doren 520
POEMS—BY MACLEISH by Philip Blair Rice 522
THE RED AND THE WHITE by Ben Belitt 522
MR. SANTAYANA'S WISDOM by Eliseo Vivas 524
LITTLE SISTER FRANCIS by Dorothy Van Doren 525
MR. BROWDER STUDIES HISTORY by Louis M. Hacker 526
SHORTER NOTICES 528
RECORDS by Henry Simon 529

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The Shape of Things

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PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S SPEECH AT BALTIMORE on April 13 to a throng of enthusiastic Young Democrats shows that he has one element of strength that may prove as valuable to him as all the Liberty Leagues and Hearst newspapers are likely to prove to his opponent. This is the fact that he seems to be retaining some of his hold on the imagination of the young people of the country. The polls of the Institute of Public Opinion show not only growing Roosevelt strength but an impressive proportion of that strength among the young voters. His most recent proposal to keep the working age within the limits of eighteen and sixty-five is calculated at once to gain votes and to decrease the vast army of the unemployed. No doubt it will do the first, although the recent hearings on the national youth bill (which the President forgot to mention) should qualify any over-great optimism about the real mood of the young people. The hopelessness of their situation is not greatly relieved by the knowledge that their school years will be lengthened a bit before they have to face a world without jobs. One may ask of what use it will be to be kept at school unless the relief appropriations will supply decent food and clothing at home, or what use to be retired at sixty-five unless we have an adequate program for old-age security. Nor shall we even begin to solve the problem of providing reemployment without a more drastic program of socialized control of industry than the Administration seems willing to commit itself to. Mr. Roosevelt's program resembles a meal that has all the trimmings but lacks the *pièce de résistance*.

*

AFTER A LONG LAPSE PARIS HAS ONCE MORE become the center of gravity in Europe. The British have shown their cards. They are determined to play for time in dealing with Hitler, while pushing for more drastic action against Mussolini. Nothing that France can do is likely to change British policy. France has the choice of throwing its support to Great Britain and the League or seeking a rapprochement with Italy as a step to building a general European alliance against Germany. Moreover, to complicate the situation further, the choice must be made on the eve of an all-important general election. At the moment public sentiment is aroused against Britain, and there is even widespread talk of abandoning the League. Without the League the French plan for a voluntary European sys-

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tem of mutual assistance would merely be a general alliance against Hitler. The nationalist press is apparently ready to scrap collective security altogether. The left is torn between a desire for strong action against Hitler and anxiety to save the League in order to preserve a broad united front of the democratic nations against fascism. But with Herriot and Blum supporting collective security, it would appear that the League is not as dead as some of the correspondents have indicated.

*

WITH FRANCE HOLDING OUT FOR A BOYCOTT against Germany in the event Hitler seeks to fortify the Rhineland and Britain pressing for further sanctions against Italy, compromise should not be impossible. Logically the two countries could agree either to abandon sanctions and all thought of collective security or to impose penalties against both aggressors. The first course would seem the path of least resistance, but it would create a storm of disapproval in both France and England. The second would be unpopular only with the extreme right. Although Italy's recent victories in Ethiopia make action by the League at this time somewhat comparable to its belated strictures against Japan in March, 1933, the logical argument for sanctions will remain unassailable until the last Italian soldier is withdrawn from Ethiopian soil. Even at this late date a strong stand against Mussolini would do much to restore the prestige of the League, a development which would be as unwelcome in Berlin and Tokyo as in Rome.

*

SENATOR VANDENBERG'S BOTHER OVER THE big AAA payments turns out now to be much ado about nothing, as far as scaring up anti-New Deal ammunition is concerned. After some heartache Secretary Wallace finally was wise enough not to wait for the Senate to adopt Vandenberg's resolution calling for the publication of all payments over $10,000, which would have forced his hand, but released the figures of his own accord. By emphasizing a hitherto neglected aspect of the agricultural problem, these figures have served a more important purpose than that of partisan politics. What they show is the great extent to which American agriculture is concentrated in large-scale holdings. Amounts running to six figures which were paid to huge corporate enterprises in wheat, cotton, sugar, and hog farming have shocked many people who had thought of the AAA payments rather as relief for the poor than as subsidies for the rich. But it is obvious that payments had to be made to the large-scale producers, since without their cooperation it would have been futile to try to raise prices by having crops plowed under. Vandenberg's suggestion of adopting a sliding scale of payments, reducing the amount paid in inverse proportion to the amount of acreage taken out of cultivation, might have been an improvement. But it would not have eliminated disproportionate AAA payments or solved the problem of how to break up large-scale holdings. The need for a solution is all the more immediate under the new Soil Act than it was under the Triple-A, for under the new act the tenants' and croppers' share of the payments is increased from 15 to 25 per cent and therefore they are all the more likely to be evicted by the big planters, who will want to avoid paying them their share.

*

THERE IS MUCH TO BE SAID FOR REPRESENTAtive Jones's proposed resolution calling upon the Tariff Commission to report the names of all corporations which benefit from the existing tariff to the extent of $100,000 a year or more. Few voters have the slightest conception of the amount of money which is extracted from the pockets of the American people each year to enrich the producers of protected commodities. Prior to the negotiation of the Cuban-American reciprocity agreement, the sugar tariff alone cost the public some $200,000,000 annually. Even today the consumer pays close to $100,000,000 for the doubtful privilege of supporting an uneconomic beet-sugar industry. On the basis of figures for 1929 and 1931 the duty on lead costs the American people $29,000,000 a year; that on ferro-manganese nearly $7,000,000; and that on watch movements approximately $7,000,000. In 1932 the tariff on dairy products added $105,000,000 to the nation's food bill. Although the total tariff bill paid by the consumer has never even been estimated, it has been found that on twenty-one products, the imports of which constituted less than 15 per cent of the total dutiable imports of the United States, the extra cost to the public was more than half a billion dollars. Not all of this vast sum finds its way into the pockets of American producers. In 1931, for example, consumers paid over $2,000,000 in duty on embroidered linen handkerchiefs, while the total American production was valued at only $90,000. The textile industry has been built under a high protective wall, yet it is bankrupt. Like all subsidies, tariffs must be constantly increased if they are to serve their purpose. The proponents of the AAA who are demanding these statistics would do well to ponder on this aspect of the problem.

*

GOOD MEN ARE OFTEN PROPOSED FOR PRIZES but prominent men generally receive them. This dictum applies with particular force to the Nobel peace price, which, with a few honorable exceptions, has sought out the more conspicuous pillars of our society such as Charles Gates Dawes, Nicholas Murray Butler, and Theodore Roosevelt instead of the genuine heroes of the war against war. It is for this reason that we greet with more enthusiasm than hope the proposal that Carl von Ossietsky be given the peace prize in 1936. His nomination has been made by ninety-three British M. P.'s representing all parties and has been seconded by peace organizations and individuals in several other countries. No more suitable or less likely candidate could have been put forward. Von Ossietsky worked for peace from the time he emerged from the trenches of the World War until he disappeared into a Nazi concentration camp in 1933. There he remains today, broken by torture and the rigors of imprisonment.

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A recent dispatch to the New York *Times* from Amsterdam, quoting the Netherlands labor paper, *Het Volk,* states that Ossietsky, who has been seriously ill for months, was recently discharged from the camp hospital and set at heavy labor in the fields. "He collapsed within a few hours, and since then has not left his bed," *Het Volk* reports. To give this man the Nobel peace prize, while it might not ease his sufferings, would magnificently dramatize the judgment of the civilized world on Hitler's *Schrecklichkeit.* But it is too much to expect. The greater likelihood is that von Ossietsky, honored only by those who knew his work, will die of his sufferings, or face execution. It was Ossietsky whom Goebbels meant when a few weeks ago he ominously remarked: "It is better that the head of one traitor should fall, in peace, than that later in war a hundred soldiers should lay down their lives for his sake."

*

THE DISMISSAL OF PRESIDENT ZAMORA HAS only served to heighten the political turmoil which has gripped Spain since the February elections. The fact that only five members of the Cortes voted against his dismissal is a sufficient indication of his extreme unpopularity. Although formerly a liberal, Zamora had incurred the hatred of the entire left because of his reactionary policies during the years in which the right was in power. The conservatives, on the other hand, could not forgive him for dissolving the Cortes and paving the way for the recent left triumph. No one concedes the right a chance in the Presidential election which will be held on May 17. Judging by the present trend of events, much may depend, however, on whether the new President is a Socialist or a representative of the republican left. With political bitterness deepening daily there can be no guaranty against a disintegration of the Popular Front or against an attempted seizure of power by the fascist clique under Robles. In either instance a strong Marxist President might avert disaster.

*

THE EXILE OF EX-PRESIDENT PLUTARCO ELIAS Calles and four of his reactionary aides brings to a climax the long struggle between President Cárdenas and the clique headed by the man who exercised undisputed mastery over Mexico for more than eleven years. To say that it was a struggle between radicalism and reaction would be to oversimplify the situation. Calles was usually regarded as a liberal until within the past year, while Cárdenas—like Calles, a very wealthy man—has never been more than a mild progressive. But sympathy with the labor movement is good politics in Mexico, and Cárdenas has been clever enough to recognize this in his struggle for mastery over Calles. With remarkable skill at playing both sides against the middle, Cárdenas also made a bid for Catholic support by lifting the restrictions against the church. Calles may not, as is charged, have been responsible for bombing the Vera Cruz express, but he unquestionably was engaged in anti-government activities. His elimination from the Mexican scene should at least simplify the fundamental political issues facing the country.

A SUCCESSFUL WORKERS' MOVEMENT IN THIS country will probably spring from the underprivileged—if they can ever be brought together. And there is surely no more fruitful ground than the ranks of the unemployed. The unification of unemployed organizations which was effected last week in Washington is therefore a significant step. Seven hundred delegates representing a membership of 150,000 from thirty-five states were present. Organizations taking part were the Workers' Alliance of America, which is in close touch with the left-wing Socialists, the National Unemployment Council, affiliated with the Communist Party, the National Unemployed League, sponsored by the "Trotzkyite" wing of the Communist movement, and several independent groups. The group as a whole picketed the WPA offices, attempted to interview somebody at the White House, from the President down—it was told that they had all "gone fishing"—and agreed to sponsor a comprehensive legislative program. The latter included passage of the Frazier-Lundeen social-insurance bill, the Marcantonio relief-standards bill, and the American youth bill. The National Executive Board urged the cooperation of liberals and trade unionists. If the united unemployed organizations could further unite with the embattled social workers who week after week are insisting—with impressive statistics—on the inadequacy of relief, they might even force Congress to pass a proper relief program.

*

MAYOR LA GUARDIA MADE PUBLIC ON APRIL 6 the report of his special committee to investigate the four-months-old strike at May's Department Store in Brooklyn. The report found that the strike was caused by the discharge of two employees for union activity, that wages at May's averaged from 20 to 33 per cent lower than city-wide averages for department-store and retail-trade employees, that during February, 1936, less than 22 per cent of the May employees worked full time, and that they were compelled to contribute fifty cents a week to a "benevolent" association. The committee also criticized Magistrates Folwell, Rudich, and Sabbatino for excessive bail or harsh sentences in cases of disorderly conduct arising out of picketing of the May store, and scored the office of the District Attorney of Kings County for attempting to obtain a charge of conspiracy against the strikers. Wage percentages are never as illuminating as the figures themselves. During the week of December 14 the pay of 349 employees averaged $13.47, the average for the forty lowest-paid workers being $7.76. The part-time average for 162 workers was $10.21, 27 in the lowest-paid part-time group averaging $5.73. The average weekly wage for the city as a whole was $19.78 for December. A lengthy answer to the committee's report from the officers of the May store evaded many of the charges, denied others, and bitterly attacked not the committee itself but Will Maslow, of the staff of the Commissioner of Accounts, who assisted in preparing the report. May's is not a healthful place to work. But the blame for conditions there rests partly on the consumers, who forget that excessively cheap merchandise can be sold only at the expense of the workers.

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Liberty and Tear Gas

THERE is one thing at least for which historians to come will be grateful to Mr. Roosevelt and his allies in Washington. That is the work the various Congressional committees and other government agencies are performing in laying bare the ribbed structure of American industrial power and the methods the industrialists use in maintaining that power. The researches of Mr. Pecora and others into American financial and banking organization and the delvings of Senator Nye and his committee into the activities of munitioneers and the maintenance of war profits have taught us more about economics and government than all the institutions of higher learning have been able to teach us in a generation. Now, as Paul Ward reports elsewhere in this issue, there are three inquiries going on in Washington that reveal with an even more terrifying clarity the anatomy of power in America today. Senator La Follette's committee on labor and education is conducting hearings on the denial of civil liberties and the right of collective bargaining to workers; Senator Black's committee on lobbying is revealing the political organizations through which the industrialists are seeking to retain and increase their power over workers; and the National Labor Relations Board is holding hearings on the employers' organizations by which the anti-union campaigns are financed.

The disclosures are none too savory, although they should not surprise those who have had any intimate contact with the realities of the struggle for labor organization today or who know the history of American industry. An elaborate system of labor spies, operating through some 200 espionage agencies and employing an army of private detectives running somewhere in the region of 100,000; the purchase by the industrialists of guns, tear gas, and munitions of all sorts in preparation for industrial warfare; the pouring of money into every means to break up trade-union organizations, terrify the workers, and poison even their confidence in one another—we have known all this, but it has never been so clearly documented in official sources.

At any time methods and activities of this sort would be alarming. But today, in the context of world fascism, we have even more cause to ponder their meaning. Wherever fascism has appeared it has been preceded by a concerted threefold effort. One phase has been the campaign to destroy trade unions, deny collective bargaining, outlaw and cripple the strike weapon, and prevent the extension of labor organization. A second has been the stifling of whatever civil liberties existed, especially for the workers. A third has been the formation of private armies and terrorist squadrons directed against labor organizations.

The pattern is all too startlingly like the one being disclosed in the Washington hearings. This does not mean that what we are witnessing is an American fascism, nor even that it has conscious fascist intentions. It is difficult to dig into motive, but there can be little doubt that most of the industrialists feel only that they are trying to maintain their business and profits, and fighting a force—trade unionism—that they regard as threatening both. Yet this does not make their actions any the less disquieting. In the sequence of fascism, motives are trampled under foot in the onrush of events. If the big industrialists, in the attempt to maintain their power over their workers, wish actually to destroy the fabric of American liberty they are taking the swiftest road toward that goal.

Liberty and tear gas do not jibe. The quality of American life is not sweetened by the spies that infest factories and make their way into trade unions, or by the gorillas who smash strikes. The promise of American life is not fulfilled by the creation of private armies which arrogate to themselves the function of the law and become little governments in themselves. Everything we have learned from recent history in Europe shows that as soon as private armies of any sort begin to be set up, whether of Black Shirts or Brown Shirts or just Pinkertons or Bergoffs, the capacity of the state to protect the ordinary liberties of men crumbles.

Our generation of liberals and progressives is a sadder and perhaps wiser one than any that has gone before. We have seen whole civilizations crushed by the brute strength of reaction. We have no hopes of building overnight any of the gleaming heavenly cities that men have dreamed of. We are learning that the only prospect that offers any sort of light for the future is to protect the tradition of American civil liberties against its enemies as long as possible, and to build slowly the economic and political power of labor and its allies. That is why liberties for workers are not only the concern of workers but of every group in America that wants liberty of any sort to survive. That is why the maintenance and extension of the right of collective bargaining, and its defense against everyone who threatens it—whether it is the industrial tyrants, the Liberty Leagues, or the espionage agencies—is the principal task we must confront.

The Air Disasters

THE tragic crack-up of a TWA airliner on the hogback of the Alleghenies last week, with the death of eleven, stunned the country out of all proportion to the casualties. Perhaps it was because it was the fourth spectacular accident in recent American air passenger travel due to low flying with little or no visibility. More deeply considered, it shook people's confidence in what they had come to consider a newly but definitely conquered realm—the realm of the air. Here, where all the resources of science and construction combine with the most daring skills, we had prided ourselves upon having attained a measure of security. It has been only in the last two years, with the development of new mechanical aids such as the radio directional beam, that blind flying, whether at night or in fog, has been authorized. It is in that same period that all four crashes have occurred. Assuming that somewhere our system of air-navigation aids is at fault, we are all asking where the fault lies.

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Three investigations have been started—one by the air line, one by the Bureau of Air Commerce of the Department of Commerce, and one by the Senate Committee on Air Safety. The results of the first two have thus far canceled out, for while the air line charges that the radio beam operated by the bureau was at fault, the bureau denies it and by implication charges the company with negligence. We place our own hope for light in the hearings of the Senate committee. Created to investigate the crash in Missouri last May when Senator Cutting and three others were killed, the committee has since been made a permanent body. Even before the recent disaster it had uncovered charges of a startling nature—charges of waste and inefficiency in the Bureau of Air Commerce which Secretary Roper ought not to let go unanswered. These charges were aired again recently in a debate in the House of Representatives.

In recounting them we do not vouch for their accuracy. It is all too easy for investigating committees to be turned to political purposes, especially with a campaign approaching. But the case of J. A. Mount is, if true, so flagrant as to require a clear answer from the department. Mr. Mount, upon being appointed Superintendent of Maintenance in the Bureau of Air Commerce in July, 1934, went on a tour of inspection of the country's airways. He found that of the radio signal systems in the twenty-six leading stations that he surveyed, not one was in perfect working order. He found wasted equipment rotting in unopened packing boxes, soot-blackened lamps through which beacon lights could shine for only a few feet. He reported these conditions and others to his superiors, with an utter lack of result except for his own demotion. Later he said in testimony that "he hoped it would not take a serious accident to awaken the bureau." Five days afterward came the Cutting airplane crash.

When the Senate committee met after the Cutting disaster it brought Mr. Mount back again to testify about maintenance standards. He told how half a million dollars appropriated for safety aids had been diverted to construction purposes "at the cost of serious deterioration in radio-beam plants and beacon lights." This was in August. In September the bureau woke up long enough to dismiss Mount outright, then went back to sleep. Meanwhile the committee found that the conditions which caused the Cutting crash "are by no means confined to the area where the crash occurred, but are general throughout the airways system . . . and unless corrected will most certainly take further toll of life and property." The bureau opened one eye, sleepily regarded the committee, and relaxed into its former somnolence. Four months later came the Arkansas disaster which killed seventeen. The committee resumed its hearings. Testimony showed that authority in the bureau was divided under three commands which conflicted in responsibility, that all except the lowest brackets of the bureau personnel had been exempted from civil-service examinations, thus allowing inspectorships to be filled by untrained political appointees, and that two other officials of the bureau besides Mount had been dismissed for complaining of faulty safety-aid maintenance. Between 1927 and 1935 the bureau investigated 101 crashes, for no single one of which it accepted responsibility or even collateral responsibility.

We are aware that bureaucracy, no matter how flagrant, does not account for the whole situation. What has happened is that the entire aviation industry has grown up so rapidly that no adequate system of control has yet been devised. Passenger miles flown in the United States have increased in four years (1931-35) from about 106,000,000 to about 314,000,000. Our advance in construction and in flying skill has been immense; there does not seem to have been a similar advance in the available flying aids. The figures of most of our commercial airlines show them operating at a loss, and continually demanding subsidies. With such a situation, obviously safety will also tend to show a deficit. In view of this a stringent governmental regulation of safety is not merely desirable; it is indispensable. Anything short of 100 per cent efficiency is criminal, given the consequences that flow from it.

If the Department of Commerce is unable to handle the situation adequately, it should release the job to someone else. The proposal now being discussed in Congress to transfer the responsibility to the Interstate Commerce Commission may prove a step in the right direction.

Labor at Sea

SAFETY at sea is a fairly simple concept. It means that ships should be so constructed as to be liable to the least possible danger from fire, leaks, and sudden emergencies; that they should be held to a rigid standard by frequent inspections; and that as a final guaranty of safety they should be manned by a trained and experienced crew of both officers and men, paid in proportion to their responsibility and decently housed. But safety at sea in the hands of Secretary Roper, like freedom of the press in the hands of Hearst, has become the slogan for a red-hunt and a device for obscuring and defeating the very methods by which safety at sea might be secured.

Secretary Roper has recommended augmenting the power of the Bureau of Navigation and Steamboat Inspection, which is a part of the Department of Commerce. In his opinion the prevention of ship disasters will depend largely upon the extent to which the bureau has jurisdiction and control over ship personnel, ship operation, and the design and construction of vessels. On its face this seems reasonable enough. But the bureau's record, allowing for all its limitations, is not reassuring. Only a few weeks ago Secretary Roper discharged two officials of the bureau for "violent and explosive insubordination" in connection with the "unauthorized" release of a resolution of the board of steamboat inspectors. This document which Mr. Roper did not care to have passed on to the public called for more rigid inspection of American passenger vessels, and recommended changes in the administration of the bureau, declaring that at present serious hazards to life are tolerated on American vessels. On April 1 Representative Bacon revealed certain facts about

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the conduct of the bureau which arouse further question whether, under its present control, it can be trusted with additional powers. Mr. Bacon pointed out that "they have six boats in the inspection service which are used . . . in enforcing rules for safety of life at sea." But further revelations suggest that the bureau has scarcely made the best use of what little equipment it has. Of the five boats in the service before June, 1935, according to Representative Bacon, "three of them were so old and in such bad condition that they would not stand the inspection of their own service." Of the other two, the boat named Eala has been intensively used for the past year—but not to promote safety at sea. For five months and ten days in the winter of 1934-35 the Eala was used for "political joy rides" by several persons named Roper or by various officials of the Department of Commerce, their families, secretaries, and guests.

Secretary Roper's approach to the important problem of ship personnel casts further doubt on his competence and his genuine interest in promoting safety. A primary element in the many sea disasters of the past few years has been human failure. For the same reason that the shipowners have blocked legislation which would have forced them to instal at their own expense more efficient safety devices, they have maintained a scandalously low scale of wages for both officers and men. We have the spectacle, as has been pointed out, of a great shipping line intrusting a five-million-dollar ship and the lives of a thousand people to a chief executive officer receiving a salary of forty dollars a week; in the lower brackets, because of the blacklist, inadequate pay, and inspection practices which are to say the least inefficient, government certificates for able-bodied seamen and lifeboat men are often carried by unqualified persons.

Considering that the United States government owns the greater share in all American shipping, it would seem to be in a position to enforce decent minima of pay and working conditions in the interest of safety. But Secretary Roper has a different answer. With the help of the shipowners but not, so far as we know, of any labor representatives, he is now sponsoring a red-hunt among the underpaid workers of the seven seas. He has so far found some 500 cases of "interruption." At first the Department of Commerce laid emphasis on cases of sabotage aboard American vessels "manned largely by foreign crews." However, in the statement of Joseph B. Weaver on April 9 the emphasis had changed. "These interruptions," Mr. Weaver said, "were primarily confined to the West Coast but recently have extended to the Gulf and the East Coast ports and to the high seas." The course of the "interruptions" follows with amazing closeness the trail of the seaworkers' revolt.

The Bureau of Navigation and Steamboat Inspection should have authority and equipment adequate to the important function it is expected to perform. It should not be subject to the influence of politicians or of shipowners more intent upon keeping sea labor in line than in making boats safe for passengers. The question is whether Secretary Roper, on the basis of his record, can be intrusted with this responsibility.

Mongolia—Red or White?

BY A strange coincidence the section of the earth which has come to be recognized as possibly the earliest home of man has today become one of the chief battle grounds of the struggle between the Old World—as exemplified by a feudalist-fascist coalition—and the new gospel of Soviet communism. For the daily clashes along the Manchurian-Outer Mongolian frontier are merely symptoms of a far more fundamental conflict which has been raging for years in this primitive, remote section of the globe.

Elsewhere in this issue Mr. Bisson describes the fifteen-year struggle in Outer Mongolia between the revolutionary elements, drawn from the cattle breeders and serfs, and the reactionary hierarchy of princes and lamas. For the time being, at least, the revolutionary elements are completely in the ascendancy in Outer Mongolia. But only a few hundred miles away in Inner Mongolia and Manchuria other princes and lamas are still in power. The Japanese have sought to exploit the class struggle to further their own aims. The coronation of Kang Teh as Emperor of Manchoukuo was a step in a far-reaching campaign to gain the support of the Mongol princes who had long given allegiance to the Ching dynasty. Where this campaign has not been successful, Japan has resorted to bribery and military conquest to gain control. What is more natural than that it should turn its attention to Outer Mongolia as a final step in preparation for the expected war with the Soviet Union? If the Japanese should be able to occupy Urga, it would be almost impossible to prevent them from cutting the Trans-Siberian near Lake Baikal and isolating the Soviet Far East.

But while the Japanese have been taking up positions in Inner Mongolia with a view to outflanking the Soviet troops in Siberia, they have in turn been threatened by the brilliant strategy of the Chinese Red Army, which has suddenly appeared in Shansi after a 2,000-mile trek through the heart of China. Though the Chinese Communists are not strong from a military point of view, their mobility makes them a constant menace to the Japanese lines of communication, while their propaganda threatens to provoke an uprising among the Young Mongols. Moreover, by an irony of fate, Chiang Kai-shek has seized upon the presence of the Communists in Shansi as an excuse for sending five divisions of Nanking troops into the forbidden North China zone. The possibility that the strength of anti-Japanese feeling in China may yet force Chiang to enter a united front with the Communists leaves Tokyo in a most unenviable position. Driven by internal pressure, the Japanese are almost certain to advance farther. Chiang may not fight; in which case the Communists are likely to gain in power. But if he chooses to resist, the chances are that the Soviet Union, and possibly the whole of Europe, will ultimately be involved. Thus it may happen that the future pages of human history are being written today in the same region which locks the secrets of the past.

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WASHINGTON WEEKLY

BY PAUL W. WARD

Young Bob La Follette

Washington, April 12

RAPIDLY there is being written into official records here a concrete, dollars-and-cents answer to the question: What is unionization worth to America's working men and women? It is being formulated on the conservative basis of determining what the big employing interests of the nation think it is worth to their own pocket-books to block effective organization of their employees in both the political and the economic fields. Three lines of investigation opened up here in the last few days are building up the collective answer.

One of these is the inquiry being followed by the Black lobby-investigating committee that swung into high gear on Wednesday following Chief Justice Wheat's conclusion in the District Supreme Court that no matter how much William Randolph Hearst and his attorney, Elisha Hanson, might desire it, he could not set himself above the people's representatives in Congress and by enjoining the Black committee try to tell the Senate how to run its business. The committee, only indirectly concerned in the question raised here, proceeded with its task of showing that the du Pont-General Motors interests and kindred groups consider it worth many thousands of dollars to themselves to keep in existence groups, such as the American Liberty League, that with constitutionalism as their shield and patriotism as their buckler wage war on the Wagner Labor Act, the TVA, and any other legislation in the interest of the wage-earners. The committee showed that the men who support the Liberty League are also the owners of the Crusaders, the Farmers' Independence Council, the Sentinels of the Republic, the American Veterans' Association, the Minute Men and Women of Today, the National Civic Federation, the Women Investors of America, and the League for Industrial Rights. A cross-indexed list of contributors to all these groups, offered in evidence, showed that Irénée and Lammot du Pont had doled out more than $125,000 to the support of this anti-social congeries. Other big donors were Alfred P. Sloan, E. F. Hutton, George H. Houston, J. Howard Pew, the Heinzes, Swifts, Stuarts, and Armours, and E. T. Weir, the steel magnate, who is known in Wall Street as a Rockefeller man.

The committee has not yet shown the total receipts of all the organizations mentioned, but what it has shown runs into millions. Add to this the sum that the same sources contribute to both the Republican and the Democratic national committees, and one has a good start toward answering what the nation's economic overlords consider a fair price for balking and bilking in the political field the millions of men and women from whose labor they live. To this aggregate there can then be added some comparable figures suggested by the testimony thus far taken by another Senate committee. This committee, which is headed by Senator La Follette and opened hearings Friday, has before it the question: Should the Senate vote an investigation of civil-liberties violations in the United States, including interference with the right of workers to organize for collective bargaining? It is more than likely that the answer will be no, unless Senator La Follette shows a more aggressive and sympathetic attitude than he has manifested in the two brief hearings held to date. He left the task of questioning the witnesses to the other members of the committee. These two Democrats, Murphy of Iowa and Thomas of Utah, indicated by their questions that they considered that the proposed investigation would be a useless undertaking, and it is their word, rather than La Follette's, that will carry weight with the Senate majority and with the reactionary Audit and Control Committee that holds the Senate purse-strings. Sitting through the hearings with a preoccupied air strikingly unlike that of his famous father under similar circumstances, Young Bob showed an astonishing reluctance to guide the witnesses into lines of testimony that would overcome the sense of futility obsessing Murphy and Thomas.

Even the eloquent opening statement of J. Warren Madden, NLRB chairman, could not counterbalance their lack of familiarity with the intricacies of labor relations. Madden, a lawyer himself, was particularly effective in arraigning such solicitors as Hal H. Smith, of the Michigan Manufacturers' Association and the Liberty League's lawyers' committee, who appeared on the employers' side in the Fruehauf Trailer Company case.

Madden and his aides went on to tell the committee

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that American employers value unionization so highly that they are willing to spend millions each year for its prevention. They testified that their preliminary investigations indicate that from 40,000 to 135,000 detectives are kept constantly employed in union espionage and sabotage, that more than 200 espionage agencies exist in the United States, and that their business is highly lucrative. Furthermore, Madden and his aides presented to the committee three steel workers—clean-cut young fellows impressively symbolizing the new generation of American labor leaders that is arising despite the depressing efforts of the A. F. of L. hierarchy. These three—J. J. Mullen of Pittsburgh, George A. Patterson of Chicago, and J. P. Harris of Portsmouth, Ohio—gave the committee some eyewitness testimony of how the steel industry's espionage system works. Incidentally, Mullen and Patterson, backed up by Heber Blankenhorn of the NLRB, offered damaging testimony in refutation of the claim of Arthur Young, vice-president of the United States Steel Corporation in charge of labor relations, that the gigantic Morgan combine has discharged its army of labor spies. According to the three witnesses, all that has happened is that headquarters have been shifted to a subsidiary, the H. C. Frick Coke Company, and the spy-in-chief is George F. Ruck, a former G-man and pal of J. Edgar Hoover. Ruck, assistant to the president of the Frick Company, was identified by Mullen as a man who under the name of "Mr. Macklin" treated with him after he had hired out at $50 a month to spy upon fellow-workers at the Clairton works of Carnegie Illinois Steel. Mullen took the job but turned over to the NLRB for use as evidence all but his last month's spy pay. He used that to pay his and Patterson's expenses to Washington to testify before the La Follette committee. That committee also learned before the week closed something of the sums that employers are paying for guns and gas for their own private armies and the local police departments they control in furtherance of their war against their workers.

More difficult to trace are the sums spent by employers for the support of nation-wide associations which integrate their anti-union campaigns, but a beginning toward this has been made in the third line of official inquiry that has been under way here. This is an NLRB inquiry in preparation for a major court test of the Wagner act. It has marked the board's adoption of the "Brandeis technique" of crushing legalistic arguments against social legislation under a mass of sociological and economic data. Brandeis originated the method in 1908 when he won from a Supreme Court no less reactionary than the present one a favorable decision on Oregon's ten-hour law for women. His brief of approximately a thousand pages devoted only a dozen of those pages to argument of principles of law; the rest were given over to a summation of the testimony of experts from all parts of the world. Taking "judicial notice" of the experts' unanimity, the Supreme Court decided that the Oregon legislature had been "reasonable." The NLRB hopes similarly to convince the present Supreme Court that Congress in enacting the Wagner bill was "reasonable," and to that end it spent the first eight days of this month in collective hearings on a group of steel cases, the sole purpose of which was to compile a mass of expert, non-partisan testimony in support of the Wagner act's purposes and principles.

One of the last witnesses to be heard was Glen A. Bowers, New York State Director of Placement and Unemployment Insurance. Testifying under subpoena, Bowers identified himself as a Harvard Business School alumnus who from 1917 until recently had been engaged continuously as an expert on labor policy by various chambers of commerce and manufacturers' associations. Al Wirin and Tom Emerson, NLRB attorneys, drew from him testimony to show how extensively and tightly the employers of the country are organized in a deliberate anti-union campaign, and in the process Wirin and Emerson demolished the claim of corporation lawyers that the relations between employer and employee are purely local, personal, and familial. They showed that the employers themselves regard that relationship as a cause for collective and nation-wide action. Bowers traced the ramifications of this anti-union network, beginning with the National Association of Manufacturers, which, he said, was organized "primarily against the growth of trade unionism among workers." He added that "the vast majority of the employers who have ten or more employees are affiliated with one or another of these . . . constituent bodies of the National Association of Manufacturers." Among the bodies he mentioned as constituents were the Associated Industries of Massachusetts and the National Industrial Council, which heads them up; Walter Gordon Merritt's League for Industrial Rights, which "is composed of those employers who have an interest in financing the adjudication of cases having to do with employer rights"; the American Plan Association and its adherent chamber-of-commerce labor committees; such research adjuncts of the anti-union pyramid as the National Industrial Conference Board; numerous trade associations, including the Iron and Steel Institute, the Automobile Manufacturers' Association, and the enormous National Metal Trades Association, which has agents out instructing employers in anti-union tactics. Bowers also told how Industrial Relations Councilors, Inc., grew out of the efforts of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to direct and unify the labor policies of all the vast Rockefeller enterprises. He described espionage and blacklisting except by telephone as "antediluvian." His testimony blandly carried the suggestion that an employer who resorted to them was foolish; he could so much more easily and safely establish a company union.

Madden

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"Germany—a Winter's Tale"

BY LION FEUCHTWANGER

HEINRICH HEINE'S satirical narrative in verse which bears this title is still being widely read today; it is read in many languages and by many people who are deeply stirred by its present timeliness. This timeliness is truly amazing. Any number of Heine's sparkling verses strike at the heart of present conditions in Germany, and half the introduction could be used in its original form as the preface to a book by any of our German émigré authors.

Nevertheless, a grim thought obsesses the reader: how very different, how tranquil things used to be! How temperate the brutality of bygone Germany when compared with that of the present! What cultured despots those rulers were, what soft bedroom slippers they wore compared with the heavy boots with which the masters of the Third Reich trample to death those who displease them! The social relations of that era still permitted its reactionary rulers to observe certain rules of the game and show some degree of fair play. What a paragon of intellect and humanity was the man Metternich, the leader of the reactionary movement during Heine's time, as compared with the man whom the generals, great landowners, and big industrialists have set up to be the *Führer* of Germany!

Truly the German winter of 1935-36 is very different from the winter of 1843-44, whose darkness Heine deplored in his great epic. What a delightful twilight that darkness was, compared to the night in which the Third Reich lies! The struggle between the classes has finally reached the point where the old leaders have been obliged to drop their masks and to boast cynically of their ruthlessness. There is no room in Germany today for fine words or romantic notions. Brute force is the supreme deity. War is no longer a last resort but a primary end; brutality is glorified for its own sake; life has become nothing more than a preparation for death on the battlefield.

Heine could speak with the rulers of his time. They understood his language. Today we can do nothing but turn in disgust from the masters of our country, these ill-bred little men who allow their diseased instincts to run riot in an orgy of vile atrocities. We can almost pity the old leaders of our reactionary movement, the generals, the great landowners, the big industrialists, who could see no other way of safeguarding their privileges than by bringing to power the degenerates who today represent Germany. Goethe's remark—"The masses fear nothing so much as reason. If they knew what was really frightful, they would fear stupidity"—aptly applies to these puppet masters behind the scenes. Our generals and industrialists could see no way out of their difficulties; they appealed for help, not to reason, but to the grossest stupidity and brutality, and now they themselves suffer from the barbarity they evoked.

During its third winter of National Socialism what is the condition of this Germany which formerly possessed thriving industries, an orderly, productive life, science, and art, and which always stood high whenever civilization was discussed? A people which once had the means to be well housed, well fed, and well clothed from the resources provided by its ancestors is reduced to slim rations, inadequate living quarters, and insufficient clothing. The country which formerly believed "humanity" and "reason" to be words of the noblest significance now indulges in the barbarous execution of women; defenseless persons are hideously mistreated in public, and such acts are considered great national spectacles. The nation which coined the phrase about the equality of everything that bears a human shape has been forced to deny this equality and to accept an absurd doctrine—compiled from pseudo-zoology and bureaucracy—of the inequality of men as the basis of law and life. Men who have been legally certified by physicians as mentally incapable of looking after their own interests are in charge of public affairs. Countless Germans, the majority, are obliged to lie or keep silent. Day after day the leaders of the people demand of their subjects lies and more lies, countless sacrifices to reason. And this Germany has set up for its idol a man whose powers of judgment are greatly inferior to the intelligence of the average citizen. This great German people, which has acclaimed the works of its great thinkers by the millions of copies, is forced to accept as its new bible "Mein Kampf," in which this new god declares that the bolshevik Russian Jew has destroyed thirty million people. During the official celebration of his party, which he puts on a par with the state, this new god, *der Führer,* announced as the strongest argument against the Marxist teachings that the real name of Karl Marx was Mardochei.

Many Germans complain that our generals, our big industrialists, our great landowners have led us back to the Middle Ages through this man Hitler. That is not true. He has led us back to the savagery of the primeval forest, to the time when men banded together in hordes which fell upon each other because each horde considered itself the best. This Third Reich of our present "Winter's Tale" is one tremendous munitions factory, a breeding farm of slaves, whose entire hope hangs on the success of the great marauding expedition toward the East, in which all the resources of the nation are invested.

No, the sharp darts of Heine's wit cannot pierce the raw, clumsy structure of the Third Reich; they are futile in the face of this gigantic attempt to lead a great people from the paths of civilization back to the primeval forest. Despite the apparent timeliness of "A Winter's Tale," present-day Germany is mirrored even more clearly by Shakespeare's sixty-sixth sonnet:

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Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry
As to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily foresworn,
And gilded honor shamefully misplac'd,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly—doctor-like—controlling skill,
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill;
Tired with all these, from these would I be gone. . . .

A living author, no matter how gifted, can scarcely hope to present as accurate an account of Germany today as Heine, in his "Winter's Tale," succeeded in giving of the Germany of a hundred years ago. Some may have visions of doing so—may dream of recording the grim drama of this decaying Germany in an epic as great and as moving as Dante's "Inferno." What a task it would be adequately to depict the three-headed Cerberus which stands guard over this Germany! What a triumvirate! The megalomaniac, the little deified man who, without knowing it, is a creature of the Reichswehr, the man without mind or culture who has been made a god and whose slightest utterances are considered emanations of the highest wisdom. At his right the empty adventurer and bully—brutish, bloated, hiding his nakedness in a thousand gaudy uniforms. At his left the littérateur, stunted in body and spirit, who stands on tiptoe ranting about heroes while he throws mud at everything great in the present epoch. The members of this triumvirate consider themselves the representatives of a "sovereign people." Yet only a decade ago this people was to the highest degree civilized.

However, I do not believe that the final literary picture of this Germany will be a melancholy one. In spite of the fearful afflictions which this last attempt of the ruling powers to seek safety through barbarism has brought upon the people, there is in this Third Reich much grotesque stupidity and symbolic laughter. Odysseus and David are heroic figures; Polyphemus and Goliath—no matter how much mischief they cause—will always remain characters in a rough-and-tumble farce. The Third Reich has done me much harm. It has killed some of my friends, imprisoned many others, and deprived me of home and property. Nevertheless, when I think of the ridiculously bureaucratic manner in which these outrages were executed, I am moved to mirth. All the stupendous lies of National Socialist propaganda and the bible of the *Führer* will in the last analysis arouse more laughter than indignation, despite all the misery they are creating. To laughter at last will come the colossal self-exultation of National Socialism and its *Führer,* the babblings about a Reich which will continue for a thousand years. I remember in a comic journal a drawing of a tiny dog standing beside a huge puddle; the sentence beneath the drawing read, "And to think that it was I who did all this." Something of the sort will, I believe, be the picture the Third Reich will leave for history. The reign of the National Socialists will be immortalized in literature in the style not of Heine but of Aristophanes. In the not too distant future of the National Socialist Reich which is to last for a thousand years there will be nothing left but laughter.

"When, Germany, I think of thee, At night, all slumber flees from me."—Heinrich Heine

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Conflict in Outer Mongolia

BY T. A. BISSON

FOR centuries Outer Mongolia has seemed as remote and inaccessible as any country of comparable size on the face of the earth. Yet this vast, relatively unsettled land threatens to become the focal point of a new world war which is maturing in the East. Military clashes of increasing severity have been occurring along the Mongolian-Manchurian frontier for more than a year. The conflict of March 31 was of a particularly alarming character. Several hundred Japanese-Manchurian troops, equipped with tanks, airplanes, heavy artillery, and machine-guns, penetrated nearly thirty miles into Outer Mongolian territory south of Lake Buir Nor. They were presumably opposed by equal or superior forces, which finally drove them out after some twenty-four hours of severe fighting. A struggle of such dimensions approaches perilously close to what is generally defined as a state of war, and the attempt to "play down" its significance becomes proportionately more difficult. This latest outbreak of hostilities took place against a diplomatic background which has been markedly altered by the recent stand of the Soviet Union with respect to the Mongolian People's Republic. Until lately there has been some reason for Japanese military circles to believe that Outer Mongolia might be "peacefully" absorbed without serious opposition from the U. S. S. R. But all illusions of this character were finally dissipated by Stalin's categorical statement to Roy W. Howard on March 4, which was later confirmed by the announcement that a mutual-assistance agreement between the Soviet Union and Outer Mongolia had been in effect since the end of 1934.

To find the clue to the Soviet Union's attitude toward Outer Mongolia, it is necessary to turn back the pages of history to the year 1921. In the spring of that year Baron Ungern von Sternberg, a White Russian adventurer exercising mastery over Outer Mongolia, launched an advance against Soviet Russian forces around Lake Baikal. Based on Urga, the army of the "Mad Baron" formed part of the network of White Russian forces utilized by Japan in the final phases of the Siberian interventionist campaign. From Japanese sources in Manchuria von Sternberg's army had been equipped with munitions and other supplies. His advance against Lake Baikal coincided with a monarchist coup at Vladivostok and renewed White Russian military operations against the Far Eastern Republic in Siberia.

At this time a revolutionary movement was spreading rapidly over Outer Mongolia. Rumblings of the approaching upheaval were heard in 1919-20 during the regime of the Chinese general, Hsü Shu-tseng, an unscrupulous agent of the Japanese-dominated Anfu clique at Peking. Bled white by its feudal-lama hierarchy and further impoverished by the tribute exacted by foreign commercial firms, the people of Outer Mongolia were finally driven to revolt by the ruthless oppression of General Hsü and his successor, Baron von Sternberg. After preliminary military successes a number of the revolutionary leaders met early in March, 1921, at Kiakhta in Soviet territory and formally constituted the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and a provisional government, with a program for the overthrow of imperialism and feudalism in Outer Mongolia. Consolidating its forces under the new government, the Mongolian movement took the offensive in the north. Joint action of the Mongolian and Soviet Russian forces repulsed von Sternberg's advance on June 5-8. A month later, on July 5, the allied Mongolian-Soviet armies captured Urga. Baron von Sternberg was seized and executed in August. By the end of the year the country was united under the Mongolian People's Government at Urga.

On November 5, 1921, the Soviet government signed an agreement with the Urga authorities which repudiated the Czarist treaties with Outer Mongolia and recognized the Mongolian People's Government. Each party to it undertook, in Article 3 of this agreement, to prevent the formation or sojourn of hostile "governments, organizations, groups, or individuals" on its territory, as well as the importation or transportation of arms by "organizations struggling directly or indirectly" against either government. Nearly three years later, by a treaty with China signed on May 31, 1924, the Soviet Union recognized Outer Mongolia as "an integral part of the Republic of China," and agreed to "effect the complete withdrawal" of all Soviet troops from Outer Mongolia. This latter pledge was fulfilled in 1925. Nevertheless, the strict application of the 1921 agreement, intended to assure the preservation of the new Outer Mongolian regime and forestall any future attempts to invade the Soviet Union through Outer Mongolia, has in effect closed that country to diplomatic or consular representatives of third powers, including China. Since the end of 1921 the development of Outer Mongolia has taken place in close association with the Soviet Union.

The first phase of this development, from 1921 to 1924, consisted of a vigorous attack on the feudal elements of the old regime, particularly on the lama monks, who possessed great power. The prerogatives of the Living Buddha were constitutionally limited, the governing rights of the feudal lords in the local districts were abrogated, and the crushing taxes on the lower classes were abolished. Toward the close of 1924 the feudal-theocratic elements, allied with new capitalist forces led by Danzan, made a desperate effort to reestablish political control. The struggle against "Danzanism" culminated in August, 1924, at the Third Congress of the Mongolian

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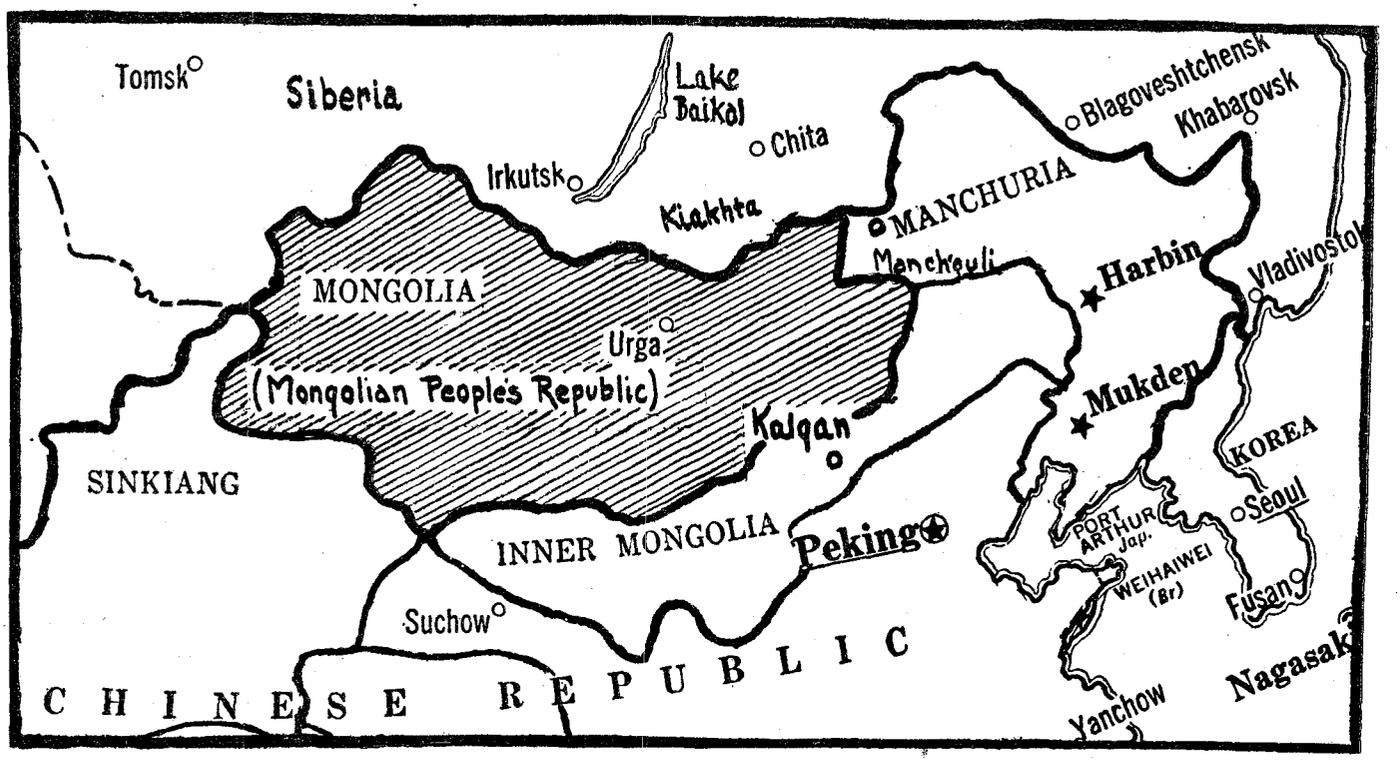

People's Revolutionary Party, which crushed the movement. This victory, and the death of the Living Buddha on May 20, 1924, laid the basis for a frontal assault on the political system of Mongolian feudalism. In June, 1924, Outer Mongolia was declared a republic, with supreme power vested in a Great Huruldan (People's Assembly). The first Great Huruldan met in November, 1924, and adopted a constitution which swept away the feudal political system. Feudal lords, lamas, merchants, and usurers were deprived of political rights, which were to be held by the laboring people only. Lands, mineral wealth, forests, and waters were nationalized. Church and state were separated, and religion was declared the private concern of every citizen. Political power was to be exercised through the Great Huruldan, which elects the government, through the Small Huruldan, an executive committee of thirty members meeting at least twice a year, and at other times through the latter's presiding committee of five members and the government.

Although the feudal political system was overthrown, the economic base of feudalism and the developing capitalism was not seriously affected. Capitalist relations grew as feudal economic restrictions were removed, and reached their peak during the years 1924-27. The feudal capitalist bloc was reestablished in 1925, quickly regained political influence, and carried out policies in trade, transportation, and industry which strengthened the trend toward capitalist development. A left-wing opposition formed in 1927 sought to mobilize mass support against the right-wing party leaders, and the political struggle was transformed into a broad anti-feudal agrarian revolution. The climax was reached at the end of 1928 in the Seventh Congress of the Mongolian Party, where the right-wing leadership was routed.

The program inaugurated in 1929 was later stigmatized as "forced socialist construction." Cattle estates of the lamas were confiscated, and a drive for collectivization was begun. With inadequate technique and transport the difficulties of managing the collectives soon became insuperable. The too rapid introduction of government-controlled trading led to a similar impasse. By the end of 1931 the population began to experience a "commodity hunger," which finally led to the repudiation of the 1929-31 policy.

In July, 1932, the Mongolian Party instituted a series of measures roughly analogous to the New Economic Policy of the Soviet Union from 1921 to 1928. Most of the collectives were voluntarily dissolved. Private enterprise was partially reestablished in the spheres of distribution, mining, and transportation, and was accommodated under certain conditions with bank credits. To counteract the effect of these concessions, annual contracts stipulating wages and hours of hired labor were enforced. This general policy, steadily adhered to since 1932, has markedly stimulated the output of cattle and agricultural products. Small-scale industrial enterprises for the processing of livestock products have been established, agriculture has been mechanized in the north and northwest, and the means of transportation have been improved. The number of lamas is declining, the network of new schools is weakening their religious hold, and their economic activities are being gradually curtailed. Expansion of the cooperative distributing apparatus has reached the point at which collective organization of production is making a new sound start.

Until 1935 the Mongolian People's Republic was free to concentrate on the problems of internal reconstruction. Except for occasional rumors of an overthrow of the new revolutionary regime Outer Mongolia was largely forgotten by the outside world. On January 24, 1935, however, the first of the long succession of "border incidents" occurred near Lake Buir Nor, on the Manchurian-

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Outer Mongolian frontier. A conference to settle these disputes met on June 3 at Manchouli in northwestern Manchuria. At this conference Japanese officers attached to the Kwantung army shamelessly browbeat the Mongolian delegates. Their aims were bluntly expressed in a note handed to the Mongolian delegation on July 4, which demanded the right of permanent residence for Japanese military observers in Outer Mongolia and permission to run telegraph lines into Mongolia to facilitate contact with Manchoukuo. Border raids staged by the Kwantung army, designed to test the strength of the opposition, have been thrown back by the Mongolian guard detachments without ceremony.

These attacks are directly related to the inner political strife in Japan, which in turn derives from the financial and diplomatic crisis of Japanese imperialism. The assassinations of February 26 in Tokyo have not solved any problems. In the new Cabinet Premier Hirota and the Finance Minister, Eiichi Baba, continue to bar the immediate realization of the army's program. Despite the retirement of the firebrands, Araki and Mazaki, the army is still committed to continental expansion, which means it must have more funds to speed up the pace of rearmament. On the other hand, the Premier and the Finance Minister represent the conservative views of the major section of Japan's business interests, which is anxious to delay the plunge into a "big war" until adequate diplomatic and financial preparation has been made.

The most immediate issue revolves around Hirota's efforts to come to an agreement with the Soviet Union on a joint border commission to investigate disputes on the frontiers of Manchoukuo. On March 17 the U. S. S. R. conceded a point by agreeing that the proposed commission might delimit the boundary, interpreting this to mean "verifying the border as fixed by treaties" by setting up additional border posts, stretching barbed wire, and digging ditches between the posts. Negotiations then struck a snag over Tokyo's insistence that the commission's competence be restricted to one section of the Manchurian-Siberian border, while the Soviet authorities held that it should cover the whole of the Manchurian-Siberian as well as the Manchurian-Outer Mongolian frontier. This issue closely affects the Kwantung army—the Japanese force in Manchuria which has been the moving spirit behind Japan's continental expansion since September 18, 1931. The formation of a Soviet-Japanese border commission would tend to limit the Kwantung army's ability to resort to independent military action on the Manchurian frontiers. To this extent it would blunt the edge of a weapon which the army extremists have used to telling effect in the struggle against the moderates at Tokyo. Border clashes at this time thus constitute the Kwantung army's answer to Hirota's negotiations with the U. S. S. R. The Soviet Union pointedly alluded to this fact on March 31 by warning the Japanese government that it assumed grave responsibility if it permitted the actions of "subordinate organs" to intensify the existing causes of friction.

Responsible authorities in Japan continue to assert that there is no possibility of a Soviet-Japanese war. Hirota declared on March 25 that there would be no war while he was Premier, and ranking Japanese military officers have recently made statements deprecating war with the Soviet Union. The logic of this position is sound—for the moment. It would be suicidal for Japan to plunge into war against the Soviet Union unless it had a hard-and-fast military agreement with Germany, and assurance of financial support from Great Britain. The first of these is rapidly maturing, if, indeed, it has not already been consummated. But Germany is not yet ready to act, and Britain's stand is still uncertain. Meanwhile the Kwantung army consolidates its war base in Manchuria, North China, and Inner Mongolia, and the time for the ultimate showdown approaches.

After EPIC in California

BY LILLIAN SYMES

SIX years of continuous economic demoralization have produced only one major—though not quite successful—political revolt in the United States. It took place in 1934 when that prodigal Ariel of the social revolution, Upton Sinclair, startled the nation by capturing the Democratic nomination for governor. Though Sinclair was pledged at the moment to carry out his program under the Democratic banner, it seemed inevitable, after he had been double-crossed by Roosevelt and Farley and outsmarted by the McAdoo machine, that his movement if it survived at all would be driven into independent politics.

On February 23 of this year, having just publicly announced his complete withdrawal from politics, Sinclair permitted his name to appear at the head of the EPIC slate of delegates to the coming Democratic national convention, a slate pledged to Sinclair on the first ballot and to Roosevelt thereafter. Temporarily this gesture has galvanized and solidified—on the surface at least—his weakened forces and will probably inspire the extension of the EPIC Sinclair-for-President fight into other Western states. But when the second ballot is taken in Philadelphia this summer and the EPIC slate—if elected—lines up behind a national platform *sans* any mention of "production for use," the End Poverty movement in California or in civilization will have come to the end of a blind alley. If, as is much more probable, the EPIC slate is defeated in the California primaries, the question of a third party and, more important, of what kind of third party

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will confront not only the EPIC remnants but labor and radical forces generally in the state. It is because both insurgent and leftist political experience in California in the past two years has a direct bearing upon the labor and farmer-labor-party ferment throughout the country that a brief review of that experience is particularly pertinent at this time.

Any fad which takes root in southern California may be expected to assume Gargantuan size within a few weeks, but not even the shrewdest political observers were prepared for the EPIC-Utopian sweep of 1934. Within a few months both the End Poverty League and the Utopian Society became mass movements, religious crusades. Though organizationally quite separate, they overlapped, and probably 99 per cent of the Utopians supported the EPIC candidates. Neither movement made similar headway in northern California until after the general strike of July and particularly after Sinclair's capture of the Democratic nomination. As the Sinclair-Merriam fight progressed in bitterness and the issue became one of labor and liberalism versus big business and reaction, Socialist and Communist candidates were ignored. Thousands of Socialist and many Wobbly and even Communist "old-timers" were giving their all to the Sinclair cause. The August primary triumph also brought with it the support of certain "loyal" Democratic politicians who were quite willing to hop on the Sinclair band-wagon even though they considered the driver "slightly nuts."

Such a mushroom growth could never survive intact its first defeat. In spite of a nucleus of twenty-two state Assemblymen around which to rally, in spite of nominal control of the state Democratic machinery by the floor leader, Cuthbert Olsen, the EPIC movement, no longer an immediate threat, lost much of its leverage. Municipal elections in Los Angeles in the spring of 1935 revealed a loss of strength in that district, and the movement split into several factions. Sheridan Downey, Sinclair's running mate, deserted to the rapidly growing Townsend movement; several of the more clear-headed ex-Socialists had become disgruntled by Sinclair's apparent paralysis of will and his unfortunate choice of advisers; and Sinclair himself was unquestionably tired of politics. To the bulk of the EPIC followers, however, Sinclair was—and still is—the pivot of the movement, the one leader whose honesty and integrity outweigh his defects of judgment.

At this auspicious moment the Communists began a "united front" drive which split the EPICs still further. The drive was started after Earl Browder's return from Moscow with the "new line" on social fascism but before the recent Comintern Congress. It created pandemonium at the EPIC convention, but it was obvious that any attempt of the Communists to drive a wedge between Sinclair and his followers in southern California would not get very far. The invaders were ejected.

In San Francisco, however, where the EPIC boom had practically collapsed after the 1934 election, they were more successful. Two or three EPIC leaders, previously active radicals, were flirting with the Communists. It surprised no one, therefore, when one or two of the almost defunct EPIC and Utopian clubs suddenly bloomed with fellow-travelers, and a newly formed Democratic Council appeared upon the roster of all united-front gatherings. Shortly thereafter a United Labor Party was launched in San Francisco to participate in the municipal elections.

The Communist Party is probably stronger in California than in any other section of the country outside New York. In San Francisco, more than in any other city, it can boast of a labor base through well-organized fractions in certain powerful unions. It also has a large and articulate group of sympathizers in professional, literary, and other middle-class circles. In addition to this specific support, a United Labor Party, as opposed to the Communist Party or even the Socialist Party, might have been expected to attract a substantial share of the protest vote registered by Sinclair and to gain the support of certain progressive labor elements.

The new party was launched by a united-front nucleus originally based on the criminal-syndicalism issue, but its sponsors made vigorous and unquestionably sincere efforts to widen its base. The powerful Maritime Federation with 12,000 members in San Francisco indorsed it, as did some smaller unions. This indorsement brought with it the support of Harry Bridges, whose popularity in left-wing labor circles was the party's chief asset. Two EPIC and Utopian candidates were chosen from the affiliated clubs. The Socialist Party refused to join, but in the absence of Socialist candidates probably nine-tenths of the Socialist vote went to the U. L. P. The most subversive planks in the party platform were indorsements of the Patman bonus bill and the Lundeen insurance bill. In all its campaign literature the United Labor Party claimed a membership of 50,000 through its affiliated groups. Allowing for exaggeration, it did seem that with the support of the Maritime Federation and its sisters, cousins, and aunts, plus the regular Communist-Socialist vote, plus the EPIC-Utopian vote, plus the sympathizer-protest vote, it was safe to bet on a total of 30,000.

The vote received was something over 14,000, less than that polled by the Communist Party in the general election of 1932, slightly more than the combined Communist-Socialist vote in the average municipal election. In short, the campaign had been a flop.

Here was a situation which should have resulted in some quiet analysis and serious thinking among the more precipitous supporters of the "any kind of labor party" idea. The workers are more sophisticated in these matters than are many of the leftist liberals, pacifists, and divinity students, and it is obvious that no labor party is going to win their support if they believe that it is either the Communist or the Socialist Party in false-face.

With the approach of the Presidential campaign, the EPICs were faced squarely with the issue of production-for-use versus Roosevelt. They dodged it temporarily. A conciliatory faction led by Senator Olsen was willing to let the President pick the slate of Democratic delegates and to pledge that slate to him. But on the Presidential slate when announced were only ten EPICs in the forty-eight delegates. At an indignant state convention in February the more or less united factions decided to run an EPIC ticket against the President's hand-picked slate, a

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ticket pledged to support Sinclair on the first ballot and to write a production-for-use plank into the national Democratic platform. Sinclair, who had gone into silence many months before, emerged, and consented in this crisis to head the ticket.

Obviously this decision settles nothing. Barring some spectacular development the defeated EPICs will meet again in a conference called for May 10, ten days after the primaries, and will there find themselves under strong Communist pressure to organize another "farmer-labor party" made up of "all pro-labor groups," including the Townsendites. A party of this all-inclusive type would obviously be neither farmer nor labor but an amorphous "people's party" torn by factions without even a common immediate objective and without sufficient labor ballast to hold it down to earth.

At its recent state convention, dominated by the militants, the Socialist Party declared itself in favor of a farmer-labor party and made friendly gestures toward the EPICs. But it also defined carefully the type of farmer-labor party with which it would cooperate as "a federation of bona fide working-class and farmer organizations in the economic and political fields," to be initiated preferably by the progressive and radical forces in the labor movement itself. The Socialist Party will probably send delegates or observers to the May 10 conference.

Whether a farmer-labor party will come out of that conference, and if so, what kind it will be, depends upon the good judgment of the EPICs who are initiating it and the kind of propaganda played upon them from the left. The inclusion of the Townsendites—the largest and best-organized pressure group in the state—would mean the swamping of EPICs, Communists, and Socialists alike. It would automatically transfer the base of the party from labor to a group of elderly lower-middle-class persons pledged to "a balanced budget" and believing that the profit system is "the mainspring of civilized progress." Such a labor party would be a joke on its promoters.

In the meantime the End Poverty League is circulating an initiative measure to put California on a production-for-use basis which would in time guarantee $200 a month for everybody—a move calculated either to capture the Townsendites or put them out of business. It is also expected to usher in the Cooperative Commonwealth.

On Being Contemporary

BY WILLIAM TROY

WHEN Ben Jonson said of his friend Shakespeare that he was not of an age but for all time, he set the pattern for a kind of literary compliment that has caused much confusion from his time to our own. For as both Shakespeare and Jonson recede into the past, it becomes evident how distinctly "Nature's child" was also the child of that tempestuous misalliance between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance which gives its peculiar character to the Elizabethan Age. Shakespeare was also, as Jonson had apostrophized him a little earlier, "Soul of the Age." Undoubtedly a more accurate tribute would have been that Shakespeare gave such a profound expression to the dominant conflict of his time as it was rehearsed in his own personality that even his contemporaries could perceive the timeless quality of his work. He was for all time because he was so profoundly and completely of his own age. Nothing of the compliment is lost through the paradoxical restatement; in fact, we admire more the sensibility that could absorb so many diverse materials, the intelligence that could operate on them, and the imagination that could finally fuse them into a succession of enduring wholes.

One is reminded of the Jonsonian eulogy by the number of eloquent reassertions that we have had in recent months of the same belief in the extra-temporal nature of literature and the literary experience. Edmund Wilson, addressing a letter to the Russians on the subject of Ernest Hemingway, deplores the so-called decadent elements in this writer's work—the bullfighting, the lion-hunting, and the rest—at the same time that he points out the coexistence of certain moral values, like courage and integrity, which are represented as timeless and therefore capable of being used over and over again. André Gide, describing how he spent one whole day of his life recently, offers what is really an apology for having turned from his social and political preoccupations to a reading of the "Odes" of Ronsard. "Nothing could be less contemporary," he confesses. "Merely very beautiful verses, answering to no other need than that of filling the heart and mind with a species of dynamic and thoroughly wholesome joy." A little further on and this emotion is qualified by the phrase "extra-temporal." And then we have had in these pages Mr. Krutch's sharp reprimand to those reviewers and critics who are in the habit of referring to one living writer after another as belonging to the past. The objection to this habit, according to Mr. Krutch, is that it is "to render trivial the whole enterprise of literature by depriving it of one of its fundamental assumptions—the assumption, that is, that human intelligence and human feeling are characterized by a continuity in virtue of which it is possible for a man to say something which will continue to seem to the point some centuries, let alone some months, after it is said."

Certainly all three of these writers are justified in stressing at this time the essential continuity of those elements of a literary work which are capable of being detached from its content. The relevance of their defense will be appreciated by anyone who has been following the cur-

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rent trend of literary criticism all over the world. But also the uncomfortable impression must strike some readers that these absolute values, this extra-temporal emotion, and this intelligence and feeling are spoken of in a way to suggest that they float about, like platonic essences, in a kind of purified literary arcanum. Certain qualities and effects have been isolated and then reduced to their proper abstractions by the mind. Further discussion of these abstractions would almost certainly require the critic to build up intellectual structures that would soon become quite independent of the particular and concrete work. We should be asked to pass, in other words, from the contemplation of the individual work to the more general problems of morality, aesthetics, and human psychology. Unquestionably the value of such criticism would be very great, for it would prove to us how much these problems are involved in every literary work. But its danger perhaps is to make us forget that every worth-while work is in itself the solution of a problem, of a whole host of problems, all of which are embraced in the general problem of the writer's relationship to his experience. A more practical program for the critic in any time would therefore be to determine, in so far as he is able, how those qualities of literature which are indubitably perennial and universal may be recreated in terms of the materials and ruling conceptions of his own age.

The problem is upon us today with such urgency that unless we do something to clarify it we are going to have very little writing possessing "form, values, and intelligence" to bequeath to posterity. The most volatile and prolific movement in American poetry at the moment, for example, is operating on the theory that to be contemporary is to invoke the future. In fact, the general mass of revolutionary poetry turned out in the last few years provides an excellent example of just how much criticism can affect the writing of a period. This criticism has instructed the writer in the belief that he is most surely of his time when he gives expression to its aspirations for the future. It encourages him to mortgage his experience for an abstraction, with the result that his work falls into the didactic, the forensic, and the oratorical, all legitimate forms of discourse but none of them dependent for their effect on the kind of direct representation of experience that is essential to literature. Form is absent from most revolutionary poetry because form in literature arises from the conflict between intelligence and experience within the writer himself, and the conflict of the revolutionary poet is waged exclusively with society. As for "values," the rendition of these is projected, along with the experience which alone could give them any reality, into the abstract future. And the intelligence, when it is allowed to operate at all, is turned outward to ends beyond the work. The type of utopian revolutionary writer in every age offers such an unsatisfactory example of the contemporary because he offers us, in the first place, such an unsatisfactory example of the writer.

Yet the quality of his work is ultimately no worse perhaps than that of the more ubiquitous type of writer who for one reason or another is cut off from the vital currents of the life and thought of his time. Examples enough we have in the writer who persists in troubling ghosts that have already been laid, the writer who is too slow to recognize when a literary attitude or method has been at least temporarily exhausted, the writer who attempts to fan into life sentiments and beliefs that have perished with the social patterns to which they were attached, and the writer who disguises his timidity or distaste beneath a disingenuous archaism. If there are more examples of this type of writer than of any other, it is because the combination of courage and awareness that stimulated great literary energy is rare in any time and place. From the standpoint of the reader who looks for the "perennial and universal" the absence of this energy is felt not so much in any backwardness in ideas and theories as in the total quality of the experience revealed in the writing of those who remain behind or "outside" their time.

We are left then with the notion of the writer who is neither of the past nor of the future but quite simply of his own time. But it should be evident that it is never simple for the writer to be of his own time. It is much easier to stuff experience into the handy molds of the immediate past or to make statements about the future. Either evasion makes fewer demands on the energy than the attempt to render with precision a setting of experience that never has been, and never will be again, quite the same in all its features. To be contemporary in this sense is to maintain the kind of equilibrium that Ronsard was able to maintain in the fifteenth century, Shakespeare in the sixteenth, and every complete writer in the centuries that have followed. This equilibrium in the writer is of course between his consciousness of the changes going on in the social and intellectual life around him and his sense of duty to those things which we call the perennial and the universal. His awareness of the first is important because it is the measure of his energy, and while energy is not the sole measure of his merit it is an indispensable perquisite to everything in his work. But this awareness can never be allowed to carry him to the point where he is led from his own object to objects outside his proper sphere. The object with which he is concerned must remain the unique expression of a unique complex of experience.

It may be added that perhaps one of the greatest handicaps to being truly contemporary is a too self-conscious effort of awareness. Among current American writers, for example, Archibald MacLeish has been particularly distinguished by the nervous concern that he has betrayed throughout his career over the necessity of being contemporary. This has led him into a succession of different versions, including, more recently, the revolutionary. It has even pressed him to the extent of composing a revision of Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach," a poem which might be considered a classic illustration of the wrong way of being contemporary. Like Arnold, Mr. MacLeish merely convinces us that it is not by talking about one's time that one best expresses it. The consciousness of being of one's time becomes an idea which, like any other idea carried beyond its limits, gets very much in the way of that deep saturation of experience which alone can render the "soul of an age."

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

AND so they killed him—after all that playing cat and mouse with him which led André Maurois to write in Paris that so much agony of suspense ought to entitle him to freedom. (The foremost law club in London felt that Sacco and Vanzetti should have been released as properly punished, if guilty, after having had the death sentence over them for seven years.) Fifty-five witnesses were invited to see this deliberate murder by the state. "A few of the witnesses," the Associated Press reports, "sickened at the sight of the execution and had to be helped out of the room." Colonel Mark O. Kimberling, veteran warden of the penitentiary, who gave the signal to the electrician by raising and lowering his arm, never once looked at the prisoner, alive or dead. Why did he not, if this is such an admirable procedure, vindicating the majesty of the law, and such a superb deterrent to private murder? The witnesses were carefully searched to see if they had cameras on them. Why? If this is a justifiable and necessary procedure to keep society intact, why not broadcast photographs of the event so that every boy and girl may be deterred by seeing just what happens when a man is accused and found guilty of killing a child? It would be nice, surely, to continue the good work by placing these pictures upon all the bulletin boards of our public schools. Then the warning of this dreadful example would have its full effect.

The state refrains from this simply because it knows that it is engaged in the most revolting business imaginable; it is stooping to the very crime for which it punishes. It knows equally well that ordinary human beings never get over their horror of witnessing such a scene, and that the more they see of it the more they are outraged by it, as are Warden Lawes and Warden Kimberling, or, in Mr. Lawes's case at least, utterly opposed to it. These men, like everyone familiar with the history of penology, are well aware that killing by the state is no deterrent whatever. When men were executed in Great Britain for stealing handkerchiefs, handkerchiefs were regularly stolen in the crowds surrounding the scaffolds. Highway robbery was not stopped in England by execution; it faded out for various reasons, but not at all because robbers were terrified into goodness by the spectacle of their pals hanging in chains at Newgate.

If execution by the state were a deterrent, the United States would today be one of the most law-abiding of nations instead of the most murderous of the allegedly civilized ones. Oh, yes, I know the statistics which show that only a small percentage of our murderers are executed. But there are still enough murders by the state to make the ordinary murderer—anyone except a woman killing in a "crime of passion"—know that he runs a mighty big risk of being shot down by a G-man or going to the scaffold. In England justice is swift and certain. There are many years when every murder in London is cleared up either by the suicide or the conviction of the murderer; yet murder goes on. Why is it that every humane man deeply versed in the psychology of crime and the handling of criminals is invariably in favor, not of increasing the length of sentences and making punishments more cruel, but of imposing milder penalties? It is because he knows that even burning alive is no deterrent but rather inflames certain types of degenerate minds, inspiring them to the very crime for which burning is so often the mob's penalty. I once walked over a spot in Alabama where a colored boy had been burned to death for an alleged rape. The law-abiding colored people there certified that he had been feeble-minded for a long time, and they doubted whether he had committed the crime which he confessed.

The truth of it all is that murders will surely go on just as long as states themselves commit this crime either on battlefields or in the death chambers. Just as long as they violate the Commandment "Thou shalt not kill," individuals will follow suit. Undoubtedly in states which have abolished capital punishment for murder, like Soviet Russia, murders will take place in fits of passion or because of mental degeneracy. For this there are different remedies. But if headway is to be made in the United States it will certainly not be before the state recognizes the sanctity of human life, declares it inviolable, and refuses to go into the killing business itself.

The worst of it is the finality of an execution. Suppose it appears some day that Hauptmann was not the killer but just a dastardly, scoundrelly profiteer by the dead? The one thing that human beings cannot replace is life. Unlikely that someone else will be found to be the Lindbergh murderer? Not wholly. Read Edwin M. Borchard's book "Convicting the Innocent." It is full of cases of the miscarriage of justice, of innocent men sent to prison or to death. Only a month ago a young man in the Tombs in New York was freed from a murder charge in the nick of time by the confession of a prisoner in the next cell. They were physically enough alike to be twins. In Kentucky a few years ago a young man was sent to prison for life for killing his sweetheart. The body was found, unrecognizable, where they were last seen together, and the father of the girl identified her clothing. After the "lifer" had served seven months, the girl walked into town alive and well. Had he been sentenced to death it would have been too late. No, what is needed is not more executions but preaching in every school and in every government office that human life is sacred and inviolable—and living up to that belief.

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BROUN'S PAGE

ONE of the reasons why I am fond of business men, particularly the big ones, is that they possess such a charming naivete. To them politics is a fairyland where anything can happen. This accounts for the numerous services which supply Wall Street with the "inside news" of Washington. I have not the slightest doubt that the professional letter-writers are men of acumen and sincerity and that they guess right upon occasion. But the notion that any of these agencies has some private pipe-line into the White House is utter nonsense. The specialist merely gives a hard ride to the familiar newspaper practice of beginning, "It is learned on good authority," and then proceeding to guess.

On many occasions I have stated the opinion that American newspapers often omit a great deal of news well worth printing, but even so I am extremely doubtful whether the various Inside Ikes provide any useful information which is not contained in the run of the news. Just now one popular game is discussing the next Roosevelt Cabinet. I do not know whether the Wall Street guides have conceded the President's reelection as yet, but I will herewith furnish gratis to all clients of the Broun Burrowing Service, Inc., the information that a Democratic victory is in the bag. I will further inform my fortunate subscribers that it won't even be close.

How do I know all this? On what research work and private polls are my dicta based? The answer is none at all. It's just a hunch. But for the most part that is the only foundation for most of the plain tales from Capitol Hill which the business men buy. A recent "letter" sent out the information that George Creel was to be a member of the next Cabinet. Mr. Creel was very much annoyed. It was news to him and also embarrassing, since he holds a job with *Collier's* as commentator on national affairs. Picking cabinets for Presidents is always pleasant, and even if you get it wrong nobody can sue you for libel.

Broun's Burrowings, Inc., looks for few changes in the official family of the President. Roper ought to go, but since he was a monstrous choice even in the beginning there does not seem much likelihood that he will be let out. Frances Perkins has been the biggest disappointment of the official family. And the rock on which she has been wrecked is one which I would never have suspected. It seems to me that Miss Perkins has tripped herself up by standing on her dignity. Surely there must be more important things for her to do than write letters about her ancestry. But Frances Perkins will probably be in the Cabinet again. Hers is a difficult post to fill while the war between the crafts and the industrialists is on. Any change might seem to favor one side or the other.

The Secretary most severely under attack happens to be the Cabinet member who has come closest to doing what he was supposed to do. I refer, of course, to Jim Farley. Reformers, as well as Republicans, have had a lot to say about "Farleyism," but there is no warrant whatsoever in naming the present spoils policy after genial Jim. It is an extremely unfortunate practice that the Postmaster General should be the political debt payer and delegate collector in each administration. The system ought to be discarded and broken. But it is the most arrant hypocrisy to picture Farley as a sinister figure unique in the history of national politics.

Homer Cummings is the mystery man of the Cabinet. I have never heard any reasonable explanation for his original temporary appointment, and so there is every reason to believe that he will go on and on. While the predicting mood is with me I will venture another guess about Presidential appointments. Republicans have made a good deal of use of the fact that many members of the Supreme Court are advanced in years, and one of the arguments for the defeat of Mr. Roosevelt is the contention that he would have a chance to alter the character of the high bench. My inside information is that there is a grave possibility that President Roosevelt will find no vacancies occurring during his second term. Again I may be challenged as to the sources of my information. I do it all by the pricking of my thumbs. It is my experience that a watched judge never boils, resigns, or dies. Friends and advocates of such jurists as Justice Sutherland, Justice McReynolds, and Justice Pierce Butler could afford these gentlemen no more effective rejuvenating tonic than the reelection of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The will to live is a powerful factor in survival, and if Mr. Roosevelt remained in the White House long enough, I fully believe that each one of the sages I have named would touch a hundred and never miss a decision day in court.

The service which I am prepared to render Wall Street subscribers seems to me in some respects more exciting than any of those now current. Not only would my weekly letter contain a mention of things likely to happen, but I should also name a few long shots for those who like something better than even money when they wager. There is no getting away from the fact that Alf M. Landon now seems a wholly possible Republican nominee. I should not care to quote more than two to one against him. Vandenberg I hold at fives, but my long-shot special is Jim Wadsworth. If the Republican convention goes into a deadlock, a highly conservative candidate will be chosen. After a good many hours or days of balloting somebody is certain to spy Wadsworth sitting somewhere about the place. Since he has made no tangible tie-ups he will be smooth, unruffled, and of pleasing appearance. It will be possible to distinguish Mr. Wadsworth from the other delegates by the fact that he is wearing a clean collar. Somebody will say, "What's the matter with Jim?" At that late hour nobody will be able to think up an answer, and James Wadsworth will be nominated on the twenty-first ballot.

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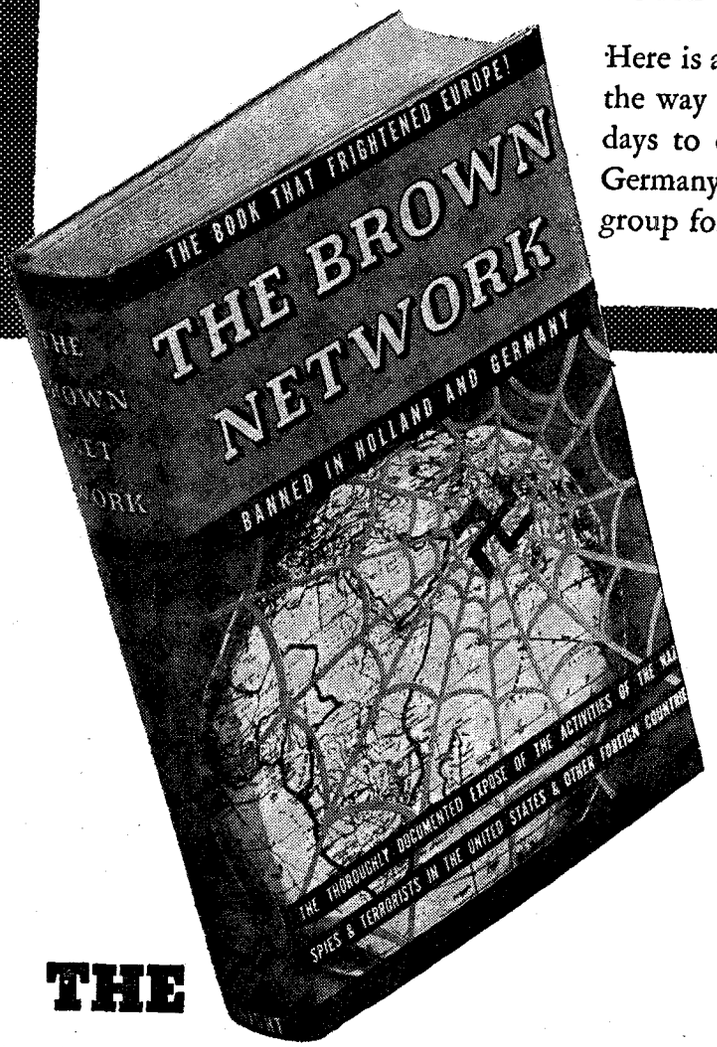
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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

. . . BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT I LIKE

BY JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

THE individual who proclaims with a triumphant air ". . . but I know what I like" has been the butt of critical scorn for a long time. At his worst he can surely be a very exasperating fellow, but he has been told off so frequently that in these days he very seldom raises his voice in the sacred groves where the intelligentsia gather; and it has, indeed, been a very long time since I last heard anyone confess (or boast), "I don't know anything about art."

On the contrary nearly everyone seems now to know nearly everything about it. Ever since "society" became the obligatory subject of every conversation, ever since the very tinker or piano-tuner became ashamed to discuss his craft except in connection with its "social implications," it has been necessary that everyone should at least profess to know nearly all there is to know about nearly everything.

And one result of this development is that tone-deaf unfortunates can discuss the function of music even though they cannot tell one note from another, and that both economists and political scientists, to say nothing of soap-box orators, now explain "where the novel is going" or "what our theater ought to be" even though they never willingly read any work of the imagination until that recent date when they discovered that such works were necessarily part of a "social plan." And to this day many of them attend performances at experimental theaters or read "proletarian" novels only with that same air of performing a civic duty which used to be remarked on the face of a certain distinguished American philosopher who was accustomed to sit sadly through symphony concerts because he was intellectually convinced that the aesthetic emotion had a place in the good life, and who would certainly append to his next book, as he always had to the others, a short chapter in which he stated all he knew about it—namely, that he was convinced it was very important.

For all of these reasons it seems to me that the man who knows nothing about art but who knows what he likes is, at this particular moment, a less conspicuous bore than an opposite type which has never, so far as I know, been defined—namely, the type of man who knows all there is to know about it, who can explain its functions and expound its laws, but who does not know what he likes, if indeed, as seems somewhat improbable, he really likes anything.

Perhaps this last suspicion is unjust. Such a man has been known to sneak off to a movie or a musical comedy after advising his friends not to miss the latest drama of social significance. But to watch him at the process of deciding what is good art and what is bad is to perceive that his liking counts for very little in the business. Instead of beginning with the simple fact that he was or was not interested, moved, exalted, or amused, he dismisses this fact as essentially irrelevant and drags out his theories. Does the work in question perform those functions which, according to his abstract theories, it ought to perform? Does it deal with a subject that is relevant to what he is convinced everybody ought to be interested in? Is it the kind of work which, as he can prove at some length, is the only kind of work an artist could possibly create at this particular moment in the world's history? And also, of course, are its conclusions sound? Does it give the right answers; does it observe what, a priori, ought to have been observable in that particular situation; does it represent people as behaving in the manner in which it has been scientifically demonstrated people of that particular class must behave?

The natural result is that he succeeds in proving by logic absolute not only the unimportance but the dulness of a work which everybody with the least appreciation of literary values insists upon reading, and demonstrates not only the importance but the flaming interest of another which is read only by those who, like himself, read what they ought to read instead of what they like to read. And of course he is merely repeating the folly of those who, in every generation, have been sure that artistic worth was something whose degree could be demonstrated on the basis of a priori principles, whether those principles happened to be largely rhetorical as they were in the eighteenth century, sentimentally moral as they were in the Victorian era, or largely social as they are today. The only play of its time which the great Augustan Age of English letters believed to be a conclusively demonstrable masterpiece was Addison's "Cato." It was indisputably great because it conveyed a useful moral at the same time that it was written in a manner strictly in accord with what was believed to be true classical principles. Yet "Cato" was attended in its own day chiefly from a sense of duty, and for more than a hundred years has been scarcely readable for any reason at all.

The great self-confidence of those theorists who do not know what it means to undergo an artistic experience arises in a curious way out of their very deficiency. Perhaps some still remember Anatole France's aesthetician who could formulate with great completeness the laws of beauty because he was blessed with an eyesight so bad that he had never actually seen any of those works of art which

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he described so glibly; this fortunate myopia is a symbol of what is often the dogmatic critic's chief qualification. The more insensitive he is to artistic values the easier it becomes for him to believe that his theories fit the facts, and he is never confounded by dulness which ought to be beautiful or by beauty which ought to be ugliness because he has not real sensitiveness to either and judges only by a priori rules which he makes the pretense of having himself deduced.

Some readers may also remember the awful warning contained in the story of this same philosopher, who once discovered that he was surprisingly happy while hanging pictures in a new apartment and who began a process of introspection in order to discover why that was. He found the reason but he lost the happiness. He was happy because he was driving nails into the wall instead of trying to find out the reasons for things.

I am not unaware that Anatole France is a writer who very conspicuously "belongs to the past." Few great reputations ever collapsed so suddenly or so completely—among the intelligentsia at least. His heart had hardly ceased to beat before Paris bookstalls displayed attacks of an almost unparalleled ferocity, and the inheritor of his still warm chair among the official immortals so far disregarded the tradition that he should eulogize his predecessor as to deliver a speech which might have appropriately begun with a perversion of Shakespeare: "I come, not to praise Caesar, but to bury him—once and for all." Yet I am not, for all this, entirely convinced that some lesson is not to be learned from the example of his purblind assessor of the value of works of art, that the fable about him is not relevant to the case of those persons who, though quite frankly more interested in other things, can say with such positive conviction what literature ought to be.

I shall not go so far as to urge that criticism be given back to the critics. In the first place, to do so might be to invite the suspicion that I wished to protect my own vested interest or the retort that in that case I ought to stick closer to my own last than I sometimes do. In the second place, the professional critic of literature, like M. France's professional critic of the graphic and plastic arts, is not infrequently no less hag-ridden by theories which do not work than the social reformer who merely takes aesthetic theory in his stride.

But I do suggest that we may justifiably look with some suspicion on the artistic pronouncements of those who have never before shown any great interest in or susceptibility to the arts; that the man who never concerned himself much with books or the theater until he discovered the "artistic front" is probably not very sensitive to artistic values no matter how hard he may applaud at what he is convinced is the right moment. Molière makes one of the speakers in "The Critique of the School for Wives" remark: "When I am amused at a comedy I do not ask myself whether or not the rules of Aristotle forbid me to laugh." That saying involves a thoroughly sound aesthetic principle. It may not be the end of critical wisdom, but it is certainly the beginning. Aristotle is oftener wrong than are what Molière liked to call "honest fellows."

The Flowering

By CHARLES HUDEBURG

For us the hesitant flower:
not naming or knowing it, we
grew it bigger from the hour
the seed, and casually, lay free
parted from older flowering—
a mystery, clean and good to see.

The rented rooms and cheap hotels
barrooms and nickleintheslot
pianos took and nurtured well
us with it, two and the flower
until the husbanding was whole:
we knew and named it in that hour.

And perfecter than lust the seed
that came to mate us as we met
and perfecter than both the one
we did with seed and flower get:
for if the seed at first was lust
parted from older flowering
the flower's seed was more than both
and more than love the flowering.

BOOKS

Government in the U. S. S. R.

SOVIET COMMUNISM: A NEW CIVILIZATION? By Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Charles Scribner's Sons. Two Volumes. $7.50.

THESE two volumes are the result of several years of investigation, comprising personal visits to the Soviet Union as well as the examination of practically the entire voluminous literature to which the new regime has given rise in the past nineteen years. They constitute, without question, the definitive account of the political and economic system of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The work stands also as a monumental climax to half a century of study of social and economic problems by two eminent English scholars.

The account of the Webbs differs from other appraisals of the Soviet Union in that it does not simply describe the mechanics of the system—its aims, successes, and failures—but demonstrates how the system operates in terms of its own logic and its guiding preconceptions. According to the Webbs' analysis the citizen of the Soviet state functions in four interrelated capacities—as a political citizen, as a producer, as a consumer, and as a super-citizen "engaged in the vocation of leadership" in the Communist Party. Whether it be as a purely political agent, or as a producer in the trade union or the industrial or agricultural cooperative, or as a consumer in one of the 45,000 consumer cooperatives, or, finally, as one of the 3,000,000 members of the Communist

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Party, the Soviet citizen participates in government through a vast hierarchy of councils beginning in the village, extending up through the city, the district, the province, and the constituent republic, and ending finally in the supreme bodies of the Union. In this multiformity of social organizations is to be found "the essence of the reality of democracy in the Soviet Union."

If it is asked how one can speak of democracy in a country where civil liberty and freedom of speech are suppressed, the Webbs would reply that Soviet democracy consists in the participation in administration and legislation of the greatest possible number of individuals above eighteen years of age, irrespective of sex or race. The authors admit that there is still a considerable number of persons in the deprived category, but contend that the number is steadily declining. They maintain that there is widespread and free discussion of policy in the factories and in the village and city soviets; as an example they cite the continuous discussion of the agricultural question from 1925 to 1928. As soon as policy has been agreed upon, however, all opposition must cease. Those who would argue that the continuance of opposition is the real test of freedom are reminded by the authors that to numerous classes in Great Britain, among other countries, freedom of expression of opinions unpleasing to the government, or to the majority of the citizens, is denied, either formally by regulation or unofficially by taking away their means of livelihood. While granting that in Russia the fundamental teachings of Marxism are not open to criticism, the Webbs insist that the prevailing orthodoxies of capitalistic nations are likewise not to be questioned without penalties. They attempt no justification, however, of the extreme measures often employed by the Soviet government in the liquidation of class enemies and the punishment of political criminals. They do submit that if the human suffering and persecution during the past nineteen years of Russia's combined industrial, religious, and political revolution is inestimable, so also was that caused by similar changes in the Western world in the period beginning with the Protestant Revolution and ending with the triumph of the factory system and parliamentary government.

The phase of the Webbs' analysis most seriously open to question is their treatment of Stalin as dictator. They point out that Stalin, unlike Hitler and Mussolini, "is not invested by law with any authority over his fellow-citizens, and not even over the members of the party to which he belongs." They further note that it is the party, not Stalin, whose directives guide the administration of the Soviet Union, and that decrees are issued in the name of the party only after lengthy discussion and agreement among the members. Yet there is no denying that although Stalin is in no sense a personal dictator, his powers are far greater than those of the President of the United States, with whom the Webbs compare him. They themselves admit that he cannot be removed from his position of supreme leadership of the party and therefore of the government from which the party is inseparable.

In their criticism of the Communist Party and the Third International (Comintern) the Webbs are more realistic. As the vanguard of the proletariat the party performs the highly essential function of guiding the general will and infusing it with socialist ideals. But its fanatical zeal in shaping the mental environment of the Soviet Union breeds the "disease of orthodoxy," which strait-jackets scientific and intellectual work and leads to much witch-hunting of "left" and "right" deviationists. In its attempt to direct the world revolution from Moscow, the Comintern has virtually killed the Communist movement in other countries. The people of these countries, the Webbs declare, resent Moscow's interference and will not follow its chosen leaders, whose chief interest is "rebellion not social reconstruction."

Within the Soviet Union the solid achievements of the regime have been largely due to the self-sacrifice and religious enthusiasm of its leaders. The greatest feat has been definitely to establish a "planned economy for community consumption," in the teeth of hostility from without and resistance from within. This socialist-industrial transformation of an essentially agricultural country was continually hampered by the peasants' resistance to the collectivization of agriculture on which the program largely depended. To overcome this opposition, which culminated in the "man-made" famine of 1931-32, a series of reforms was instigated following Stalin's famous manifesto, "Dizziness with Success." Forceful collectivization gave way to voluntary membership in agricultural cooperatives. Successive requisitioning was discontinued. Henceforth only one official levy was to be made. This was to be fixed in advance and in proportion to the normal harvest. In addition to this normal tax, the cooperatives contracted to pay the state a definite amount for the use of tractors, machinery, and seeds. The remaining surplus could then be sold in the open market and the proceeds divided among the members in proportion to their varying contributions in stock and labor. Although the cooperatives rather than the individual members owned the land, each member retained the right to own a certain amount of stock and to cultivate his garden. These owner-producer cooperatives (*kolkhozi*), paralleling in agriculture the *artel* in handicraft industry and fishing, represent a decided retreat from forceful transformation of peasants into wage-earners on state farms (*sovkhozi*) or in agricultural communes. But judging from the superior harvests, they have eased the peasants' recalcitrance and are paving the way for complete socialization even though at a much slower pace.

In the past it was contended that socialism could never be established in Russia if for no other reason than that the peasant was too individualistic. This argument having been discredited, the doubt has found a new basis in theoretical economics. Orthodox economists like von Hayek, Brutzkus, and von Mises are now declaring that the planned economy is doomed to failure. In combating this view the Webbs unfortunately overlooked the essential point in the argument. These economists do not, as the Webbs seem to think, contend simply that in the absence of profits an economy is bereft of administrative guidance. They maintain rather that the whole market mechanism with which capitalist profits and risks are connected serves properly to allocate the productive resources of the community through the medium of the relation between costs of production and market prices. From their argument it follows that in a social economy where not simply profits but this entire mechanism is destroyed there is no way of determining the most economic employment of labor and capital. A planned socialist economy is therefore without administrative guidance and must ultimately bog down in hopeless confusion. Since these critics admit that Russia has at present no unemployment or business-cycle problem but contend that these will develop as soon as the country is sufficiently industrialized, it is rather futile to attempt to refute their argument, as the Webbs do, by pointing to the success of the Five-Year Plan. Yet on the basis of a theoretical analysis of the functioning of costs and prices in the Soviet economy, Gourevich, among others, has shown that no insoluble problems of this kind need arise.

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It has been pointed out before that the real problems the Soviet Union faces are political rather than economic. They are problems of human nature. The Webbs believe that the Soviets have already disproved the old theory that human nature cannot be changed. In education, health, and sex relations, in the treatment of criminals and prostitutes, and in the care of the aged the Soviets have already effected a virtual revolution. According to the Webbs, they are well on the way toward the creation of a "classless" society in which every person will be free from exploitation and free to develop his capacities on terms of equality without regard to sex or race—in short, a new social environment for the remaking of man.

The problems remaining to be solved—notably housing, administration, and raising the standard of living—are manifold and difficult. But this new industrial civilization which functions without benefit of landlord or capitalist has manifestly established new industrial incentives and social ideals. And the authors conclude that it will not only endure but spread to other lands, in modified or unmodified form, by revolution or by peaceful means. ABRAM L. HARRIS

Marvelous Boy

YOUNG MR. DISRAELI. By Elswyth Thane. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.

THE young Disraeli to whom Miss Thane limits herself must be regarded in a very different light from the statesman whose career unrolls itself in the four bulky volumes of Buckle and Monypenny. Thinking of the early years alone, we must place him with those other geniuses of his century who turned their youth into good theater—Byron, who so little antedated him, and Whistler and Wilde. The aspiring Jew who at his first meeting with Melbourne announced that he intended to be Prime Minister bears a marked resemblance to the poet who awoke one morning to find himself famous and to the other poet who had nothing to declare to the customs but his genius. There was in him much the same love of show and craving for the limelight, and much the same impudent wit to command them. Only the young Disraeli was less undisciplined and, it may be, less frivolous; his dandyism and showmanship were a mask as well as a costume, and what they masked was a strong desire to win fame not by glitter but by achievement. In the boy of twenty who captivated Sir Walter and fetched Lockhart to London were the seeds of the master strategist of the Congress of Berlin.

But it is the fledgling of whom Miss Thane writes—the boy speculator whose large debts were not to be discharged for thirty years, the debonair author of "Vivian Grey," the ecstatic visitor to Constantinople and Cairo, the diner-out at impressive London dinner tables, condescended to by Peel, patronized politically by Lyndhurst, taken up by Lady Blessington, squired round by D'Orsay; and we leave him, having already been the lover of one society woman, about to become the husband of another. Already he has conquered the town, entered Parliament, and sought to engage in a duel, and carries with him that faint breath of scandal and promise of fireworks by which unknown men become lions in society.

All this Disraeli had accomplished at thirty-five, during an era of momentous changes and imposing personalities, his wits somehow managing to keep pace with his enthusiasm; and we may agree with Miss Thane and with so many others before her that it rivals the most spectacular fiction. Indeed, it is almost of a piece with the trashiest novel ever composed; no self-respecting writer would care to sign his name to such a story, and perhaps no altogether self-respecting person would care to live it. It is not high comedy, but something badly balanced between romance and caricature, and only redeemed —or rather, only made ironic—by the sincerity with which Disraeli attempted a great career from the springboard of coxcombry. In those years he did not so much have personality as a staggering ingenuity, and his clever stunts are more amusing than his clever phrases.

In offering us Disraeli against the background of his age, Miss Thane has done nothing better than a picturesque job. She has not the wit to match his wit, or the suavity to match his suavity; he is allowed to participate in some intolerable imaginary dialogues, his relations with his sister and with Mrs. Lewis are dilated upon without taste or insight, and nowhere does one get a true understanding, or even a vigorous interpretation, of the man. It may be that Miss Thane counted so heavily on Disraeli's inherent glamor and appeal that she did too little in an artistic way to enhance them.

As for the background, she has plucked carelessly out of whatever she has read, and plumped things down wherever they seemed in keeping. There are fairly irrelevant bits about Louis XVIII, fairly hackneyed bits about Victoria and her uncles; but this sort of thing no more provides a really illuminating background than Miss Thane's addiction to famous names. Had she really wanted to make clear the world in which Disraeli spent his youth—that social transition from the Regency to Victorianism, that political transition from Whigs and Tories to Liberals and Conservatives—she would have given us a more considered picture of Wellington and Canning, Peel, Melbourne, and Stanley; she would have complemented the atmosphere of Lady Blessington's with the atmosphere of Holland House, and perhaps thrown in for contrast the early career of that so different literary M. P., Macaulay. As it is, what we are told of politics smacks of a raid on the encyclopedia, and what we are told of people is chiefly tittle-tattle. These, eked out by the third-rate invented conversations, add up to a pastiche in which Disraeli plays too ornamental and Byronic a role. It is quite true, of course, that the stagy Disraeli of those years was influenced by Byron. But it is worth remembering that he somewhere chose Bolingbroke for his model and that, though no scoundrel like his forbear, he forged his career in the same courtly school. Miss Thane might have employed her hindsight to show us that the Byronism was hardly skin-deep. LOUIS KRONENBERGER

Criticism by Exclamation

SHAKESPEARE. By John Middleton Murry. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.

I CANNOT understand what Edwin Muir, Harold Nicolson, and Rebecca West could have been thinking about when in the blurbs they wrote for this book they called it "patient," "scholarly," and "sensible," and praised Mr. Murry for "his return to 'pure' as distinct from sentimental criticism." Blurbs are seldom worth refuting, but these three persons are known for their shrewd wits and their sharp tongues; so it becomes necessary to warn the purchaser that Mr. Murry has written one of the breathiest of all books about Shakespeare. It contains the following master strokes of patient scholarship and sensible, pure commentary:

> "Gentle" three times, and thrice-gentle. . . . How lovely! The difference between us and Shakespeare is that Shakespeare

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can express the kind of knowledge which remains unutterable and unuttered in the hearts of us ordinary folk.

There are moments—and this is one of them—when I think that the most marvelous speech in all Shakespeare. It is wonderful. There is nothing remotely like it in all the literature of the world. How should there be? It is Shakespeare's requiem over the darling of his imagination. There is no death like Falstaff's; therefore there is no description of a death like this.

What Englishman has not thrilled to it? It is the speech of an English king [Henry V.]. No English king ever spoke like this. But no matter. . . . He is king by right divine, and by right of nature: for these two rights are one.

We have seen what she [Ophelia] has seen—all and maybe more. It is one of the crowning privileges of being born an Englishman.

"This is a most sensible and sympathetic book," writes Rebecca West, "full of imagination properly governed by reverence for its subject." I don't know about reverence. I suppose Mr. Murry has a lot of it. But of the more relevant thing, respect, he lacks even the last decent shred. Somewhere he speaks with scorn of the critic who does not know how to "avoid ascending or descending into some private universe of his own and calling it Shakespeare." Yet that is what he has done, wantonly and wallowingly. He has used the ablest artist in English letters as an excuse for airing his personal views about Poetry and Life; views, furthermore, which he does not know how to keep from sounding like gibberish, and which I say *are* gibberish. It is time to quote again.

In the end there is nothing to do but to surrender to Shakespeare. . . . He is like life itself, he *is* life itself.

Behind and beyond the unfolding of his poetic genius is an upsurge in the blood: the spiritual happening is also physical. This is creation out of richness, the spontaneous overflow of the naturalness of human nature, expanding into utterance through genius.

We can tell the difference between the thoughts which he did entertain creatively, and to which his being was responsive, and these which were merely thoughts.

Into that shape, or this, Shakespeare's creative spontaneity could pour itself without constraint: this was a congenial incarnation of his impersonal self.

The ideal is the real.

The basis and root of poetry is spontaneous utterance of the undivided being. It is not the utterance of thought, neither is it the utterance of emotion: it is the utterance of the being before these faculties are differentiated.

It was not in his natural method to compose a drama as he composed "King Lear." The creative was not creating itself.

A day will come when the world of Experience itself will be transfused and transmuted by the Imagination, so that Innocence may grow to ripeness unbroken. I believe this, but it is from Shakespeare above all others that I have learned to believe it.

We are at the end of the resources of terminology: and we must take the plunge into meaningful nonsense. Shakespeare *is* Life, uttering itself, through the twofold Imagination: the spontaneous speech of the undivided, reunited Man, and that spontaneity provoked through his self-identification with the figures of his Imagination, in the more familiar sense—the figures of his Dream. It is the intensity of his self-identification with the figures of the Dream which breaks down, ever and again, the resistance of the continually reformed Self to the spontaneity of the Life within him.

He [Prospero] is the quintessence of a quintessence of a quintessence.

Shakespeare can stand this sort of thing, of course, better than Keats can; a few years ago, remember, Mr. Murry was

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ascending into Keats. Shakespeare, in fact, has been standing it a hundred and fifty years, for Mr. Murry represents romantic criticism in its latest phase; and I hope its most decadent. The very rottenness of this writing, and the appearance here of every romantic fallacy in its feeblest and most ridiculous form, encourages me to believe that the decadence is complete. What was well done by Coleridge needs never to be done again, or at any rate so badly. Who after reading Mr. Murry's book would want to write one like it? Who, even, would want to write about Shakespeare at all? Mr. Murry seems to have been haunted by similar questions. "Is it really necessary," he cries, "that some poor pedagogue like myself must stand at the blackboard to make a diagram of divinity? If only I were convinced that silence in others meant understanding, how gladly would I hold my peace and leave Shakespeare's enchantment to work its miracle upon the minds and hearts of men!" He has our sympathy, even more than he supposes. We want to believe as badly as he does that silence in others means understanding; the only difference is that we do indeed believe it. Shakespeare survives in the minds of his readers, the vast majority of whom, praise God, are inarticulate. Not that books, most of them bad, will cease to be written about the author of "Hamlet" and "Henry IV." And not that any of them need ever be entirely valueless, since the variety of possible truths about this author is very great. I should make it clear, for instance, that Mr. Murry has said some good and useful things about such specific matters as the loyalty of the Duke of York in "Richard II," the vitality of the Bastard in "King John," the language of "Othello," the sadness of "Twelfth Night," the concept of time in "Macbeth," and the significance of Desdemona's handkerchief. But the rest should have been silence.

MARK VAN DOREN

Poems—by MacLeish

PUBLIC SPEECH. By Archibald MacLeish. Farrar and Rinehart. $1.

OF THE twenty poems in this volume half are, after a fashion, tracts for the times. Hence the title, "Public Speech," despite which the poems suggest not so much the orator swaying crowds as a man's colloquy with himself. Although they comment on matters of public import in a vein of gnomic wisdom, one is forced to discuss them in connection with their author's mental biography. The Proteus among contemporary poets, Mr. MacLeish has often changed both his style and his mind. To find a consistent attitude in his latest work would be difficult: his convictions seem to have been in flux even while he was writing this little book. The most significant fact is perhaps that Mr. MacLeish has come to feel the necessity of having convictions at all. Some years ago he wrote that "a poem should not mean but be"; now his work must be discussed largely in terms of its "meanings."

In politics he has continued to move steadily toward the left, at the same time weighing new values against old and attempting to bring them into some kind of synthesis. Certain of the old values, "liberty and pride and hope," he finds can no longer serve as guide marks. In their place is love, not a sentimental afflatus but a love that has seen faces "bloody from the slugger's blows" and has "heard the cold child cry for hunger":

> Love that hardens into hate—
> Love like hatred and as bright—

Speech to a Crowd urges the living to cease awaiting messages from the dead and to take the earth and enjoy its bounty. Along with such calls to arms are other poems praising excellence "whether of earth or art" and warning "those who say Comrade" that brotherhood comes from living and suffering together and is "not to be had for a word or a week's wishing." Elsewhere the poet exults at living in a time of change, while professing himself unable to share in its impetus. He identifies himself with the dying order, the "outward wave that spills the inward forward," and yields to the young men with a kind of joyous stoicism:

> Let them go over us all I say with the thunder of
> What's next to be in the world. It's we will be under it!

These poems are bare and direct; as with most good aphoristic verse their merit consists in eloquence, a grave wit, and the rush of passionate sincerity. The falling rhythms which MacLeish took over from Ezra Pound's "Cantos," and which he chose in order to express the nervous exhaustion of American speech, still predominate. A tautening of them, however, is noticeable, and he writes also in stronger trochees and iambs. Now, in his forties, he has served a long apprenticeship to various masters; there are signs that a personal style is at last beginning to crystallize.

Mr. MacLeish has not received the praise that he deserves for writing some of the best love poems of our time, poems that combine a physical need, simply stated, with a hunger for the loved one's total presence. The love poems that compose the second half of this volume contain some of his finest imagery:

> They stare
> Each in the other's face like those who feed
> Delight in mirrors . . .

What keeps this from being poetry of the first order is that the scene is not wholly particularized; objects are too often mentioned rather than recreated. The Reconciliation starts as though it might achieve a massive and luminous immediacy:

> Time like the repetitions of a child's piano
> Brings me the room again the shallow lamp the love
> The night the silence the slow bell the echoed answer

Just as the scene is about to assume bold relief, associations from the past crowd it out. There are reasons why this should occur sooner or later in the poem; in fact, it constitutes the point of the poem, for the reconciliation of the lovers is not complete. Before dispersing the effect, however, he could well have given it firmer shape, and he would have heightened the intensity of the whole by thus sharpening the contrast.

PHILIP BLAIR RICE

The Red and the White

DARKNESS AND DAWN. By Alexei Tolstoi. Translated by Edith Bone and Emile Burns. Longmans, Green and Company. $2.50.

WE THE LIVING. By Ayn Rand. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

MARXISTS who have thus far preserved a united front of slogans, stencils, and steam rollers, would do well to examine Alexei Tolstoi's new novel. "Darkness and Dawn" is, on the face of it, ideally suited to propagandist treatment. Its theme is Bolshevist revolt; more significantly still, it is a work written by a revolutionary for revolutionaries. In our own country as elsewhere party parables have been called in to plead many a lesser cause; yet Alexei Tolstoi, working with the material of revolution itself, has written a novel whose general detachment and freedom from cant may well serve as a pattern for American zealots.

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At first thought "Darkness and Dawn" strongly suggests Dostoevski's "The Possessed." Like that novel it is concerned with the clash of individual and revolutionary values, though to exactly opposite effect. However, Tolstoi's unit of measurement is neither so spacious nor so complex as Dostoevski's. The case has been made to rest—wisely perhaps—upon the fortunes of a single family group, with each member of the group carrying forward a more or less personalized problem in orientation. Thus Book One deals with the impact of a tottering order upon the two sisters, Katia and Dasha Bulovin, and upon those who touch the periphery of their lives. Despite her later conversion Katia, the eldest of the two, suggests the type of the declining regime, moving purposelessly in a formal void and courting vague talk of a coming "revolution of the spirit, the revolution of complete liberty." Dasha, on the other hand, is seen less clearly as an emblem of transition than as an individual in her own right—her strange blend of assertiveness and indecision is accountable, certainly, in terms of either.

The novel achieves full stature with the second of the two books, which treats of the outbreak of the World War and the Bolshevist uprisings of 1918. Here the theme takes leave of the drawing-room to cut a wide swath through battlefields and city streets, and evoke an unforgettable picture of a nation spilling its blood helplessly in two causes. The individual portraits are suspended or lost sight of: Dasha and Katia appear and reappear to little purpose, though their husbands, Telegin and Roshin, take on portent in the conflict. Unfortunately, it cannot be said that Tolstoi has in the end shown himself equal to his massive undertaking. Too much is left in limbo in the closing section, or is obscured by mass violence: yet what has been achieved has been achieved powerfully.

Miss Rand, who is described as young, Russian, and a former colonist of the U. S. S. R., is out to puncture a bubble —with a bludgeon. She has written a novel to make it finally plain that the Soviet state, as far as she has been able to discover, is not only a farce on the face of it but is likewise fostering a race of "crippled, creeping, crawling, broken monstrosities." Miss Rand is determined that her readers shall have nothing less than the whole truth. Kira Argounova, her protagonist, speaks for her on at least one occasion: "For one insane second Kira wondered if she could tear through the crowd, rush up to that woman [a visiting English trade-union delegate] and yell to her, to England's workers, to the world, the truth that they were seeking." We are left to assume that "We the Living" is the answer.

We first meet Kira as a girl of eighteen with the "fearfully expectant look of a warrior who is entering a strange city"; she enrolls in the Technological Institute soon after arriving, which presumably would make her an intellectual. From the very outset her attitude toward the experiment in which she shares is one of contempt and ridicule; she "loathes their ideals but admires their methods"—which would conceivably make her a mystic. Not many chapters on, she offers herself to one Leo Kovalensky, a total stranger, a few moments after first laying eyes on him, because she "liked his face"; which, one is left to ponder, might in some way account for her "individualism." The remainder of the novel shuttles about aimlessly from bedroom to rostrum, with Kira playing the role of a patient Griselda to Leo's Don Juan. Much love-making occurs in the interim, and considerable speech-making, and one is bound to confess that the former is managed to vastly greater effect. Leo in due course of time is revealed in his true colors as a counter-revolutionary, a cad,

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Maury Maverick on the South

When Congressman Maverick asks, "What is wrong with the South?" he does so as a Texan who knows and loves the South of today, not as a romancer who pines for "the sweet imaginary odor of the magnolia blossoms." Have Northerners caused the plight of the South? Absurd, asserts Mr. Maverick. Contrary to popular opinion he accuses factions which at this moment exploit the North and West as well as the South!

M. E. Ravage on the French Elections

The fate of France and to an extent that of the whole of Europe depend on the French elections this month. M. E. Ravage, *The Nation's* correspondent in France, discusses the frantic last-minute efforts of the fascists to utilize the Rhineland crisis to prevent the expected left sweep, and appraises the balance of forces as they appear in the final days of the campaign.

Louis M. Lyons on Governor Curley of Massachusetts

The phenomenal rise of Jim Curley continues to astonish observers who have become accustomed to fantasies in American politics. His mastery of the Massachusetts Irish, his strange tactics, his amazing ambitions—all are discussed by Louis M. Lyons, a Boston newspaperman who has covered the unsavory story from its beginning. We present Governor Curley at this time because of his importance in the Presidential campaign, in which Massachusetts is regarded as a crucial state.

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and a gigolo; Kira dies in a snowdrift while attempting to cross the border; and, presumably, the myth of a communist state explodes to the sound of low, mocking laughter.

It is not the intention of this reviewer to quarrel with Miss Rand's politics except to point out in passing that her excessive theatricality invites suspicion. It may be, as we are asked to believe, that petty officials in Soviet Russia ride to the opera in foreign limousines while the worker goes wheatless and meatless; similarly it may be true that consumptives are denied asylum solely for the reason that they are not affiliated party members. Yet it must be said that if Miss Rand has indeed presented us with the facts, she has given us no reason to respect Kira as her spokesman.

BEN BELITT

Mr. Santayana's Wisdom

OBITER SCRIPTA. LECTURES, ESSAYS, AND REVIEWS. By George Santayana. Edited by Justus Buchler and Benjamin Schwartz. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

THE editors of this volume deserve thanks for making easily available to the student of Mr. Santayana a number of his papers not easy to obtain. At least four of these papers—Philosophical Heresy, Literal and Symbolic Knowledge, The Unknowable, and Some Meanings of the Word "Is"—are an admirable introduction to Mr. Santayana's philosophy; and the paper on Ultimate Religion, read at the Spinoza tercentenary at The Hague, is a welcome postscript to the third volume of "The Life of Reason."

By far the best and the most important papers in this collection are the essentially technical ones, and this makes one wonder at the attitude which has sought to deny Mr. Santayana a place in the world of academic philosophy while granting him a "wisdom" for which he has become almost legendary. It is true that of late a willingness to admit that he has "paid his debt to the professors" has been expressed. And yet the truth would seem to be that his contribution to technical thought has been considerable and that it is his wisdom which needs to be questioned. For in what does this wisdom consist, and from what sources does it spring?

It springs, I will be told, from detachment, and consists in a "sweet reasonableness" which has generously sought to understand the inward bent of things and the perfection of which each is capable after its kind, in order to celebrate as the supreme value a measured life, free from sweat, malice, and unseemly excess. And isn't this what we all in our hearts want? The answer is familiar but not convincing. For even the most sympathetic reader can never quite free himself from the sense of the fundamental irrelevance, the underlying frivolity, of Mr. Santayana's work, even that done before the war.

The irrelevance will appear if we consider in what consists that "pure philosophy" of which he speaks in the author's preface to this book, and to which he has been wedded, he says, by nature. Pure philosophy is achieved when one attains to a "radical clearness" and to "an ultimate courage." These virtues will enable us to keep our gaze steadfastly on a realm of perfection and eschew the market-place and the fetid air of the crooked alleys which lead to it. This realm of perfection—of which he gets a better glimpse, it seems, from Mussolini's Rome than from Harvard or from Oxford—is a realm in which the "actuality of spirit" burns without combustion, and loves essences without animal urge; solves, in short, the difficulties of experience by ignoring the conditions of existence, while asserting with sweet reasonableness that ideals must have natural bases.

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Thus envisaged, Mr. Santayana's wisdom turns out to consist of affirmations which one soon discovers to be denials, of a pretended detachment which turns out to be indifference, and of a scorn of "partisan heat" and an avoidance of "resolution," not because they are blind, as it claims, but because the need for them is never felt, and they are not therefore the expression of a disciplined effort—as in Spinoza, for instance—but the drift of a mind without passion or without animal urge. Is it any wonder, then, that we have always vaguely felt that under Mr. Santayana's richly embroidered wisdom lurked the frivolity of a mind engaged by "the hypnotic charm of identity or [by] the dialectic pattern of essences," which, in a phrase in one of these papers, "soon wearies a restive animal and seems to him idiotic"?

But when we have said this we have not said all. For this philosopher-poet still taunts us with his cadences and his ironic smile, and in spite of our dissatisfaction we turn to his fabled realm of essence and to his dream of a life of reason for the coolness and the serenity which those who stand close to their fellows often need, and find, in our day, more readily and satisfactorily in his pages than anywhere else.

ELISEO VIVAS

Little Sister Francis

THREESCORE. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SARAH N. CLEGHORN. With an Introduction by Robert Frost. Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. $3.

MR. FROST, in his sharp, wise, and witty introduction to Miss Cleghorn's book, calls her by her right name—a saint. He points out also that saintliness is only a glorified way of minding other people's business. When she was a girl, Sarah Cleghorn could go up to a man on the street and ask him not to spit on the sidewalk. When she was a woman, marching in the great Socialist peace parade that filled Fifth Avenue a couple of days after Armistice Day, she saw the attempts of "a little body of men in uniform" to break the lines of marchers. Let her tell it: "I saw two more khaki uniforms coming toward us, and ran over to them and seized one of them by the sleeve, without premeditation, saying in ladylike tones, 'Please don't!' "

Anyone to whom this episode sounds ridiculous does not like saints. Such a person would have been amused—or disgusted—by St. Francis when he gave his cloak and his coat to the beggar. But there are others who are eternally moved by the force of pacific non-resistance; who are touched when they hear "Please *don't,*" in ladylike tones; who respond when someone courteously says to them, "I am your brother." These persons will be touched by Sarah Cleghorn.

She spent the greater part of her girlhood and early womanhood in Manchester, Vermont. Her life was orderly, quiet, pleasant, and secure. She and her brother Carl lived with two elderly aunts. Young Sarah was not very different from her companions except that occasionally she "burned." Vivisection fired her first. She loved animals; she could not bear to know they were being hurt. Such simplifications were always possible to her. She was steadily writing poetry which the *Atlantic Monthly* almost as steadily published. Although she knew nothing of the labor movement or the Socialist struggle, she began, several years before the war, to "burn" in those directions. She had long since become the champion of the Negro. It was only a step to what are probably her most famous four lines, published by F. P. A. in the New York *Tribune* in 1914:

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She was a thoroughgoing pacifist during the war and has remained so ever since. Of the "necessity" of war she speaks eloquently:

> I saw its "necessity" exactly like the "necessity," 300 years ago, to burn Protestants and rack Catholics in order to defend their respective religions. I saw it just as I saw the "necessity" to fight duels, the "necessity" to kidnap slaves, the "necessity" to hunt out witches, the "necessity" to flog children.

Sarah Cleghorn, in short, has never known the meaning of the word compromise. Her principles are firm and unassailable. She thinks she could not endure physical suffering for them, but I have a notion she is wrong. Saints can also be martyrs.

At a time when the virtues which Miss Cleghorn so persuasively manifests are being for the moment passed over, her book is very warm and refreshing. Young revolutionists to whom the world is a flame, a peak to be scaled, a long march in which the strong will reach the goal and the weak will fall, unmourned, by the way, do not often remember poverty, charity, a pure heart, and a cheerful countenance. But they should be warned. For these things have power. The people who weep over "Little Women" and "King Lear" are in a sense crying over the same thing—the struggle between good and evil. It is a great theme, for a book or for a life.

DOROTHY VAN DOREN

Mr. Browder Studies History

WHAT IS COMMUNISM? By Earl Browder. The Vanguard Press. $2.

HIS present book, says the secretary of the Communist Party, is "the authoritative answer . . . to the question 'What is communism?' " One has every reason to expect that the spokesman for the American Communists will talk up boldly on ideological and tactical problems. Mr. Browder does not do so. Indeed, so confused and obscure is he on almost every fundamental question that the reader quits these pages wondering whether he is not witnessing the disintegration of one of the two radical political parties of the country.

Mr. Browder, in search of a broad political platform, has somehow lost his political principles; and having been prevailed upon to relinquish his earlier ultra-leftist tendencies, has also somewhere in the process left behind his Marxism. Increasingly isolated as a result of its former dual-unionist and social-fascist lines, the Communist Party has been compelled to start out on a hunt for new, notably middle-class, allies. For inspiration it has gone back to the pages of American history.

Mr. Browder, this book shows, has been reading American history. That he has read it hastily is perhaps unimportant; nevertheless, it is a little difficult to accept even upon his authority such statements as the following: the task of 1776 was to "free a rising capitalism from the fetters of a dying feudal system"; and "the men who wrote the Declaration of Independence had been nurtured upon the French Encyclopedists and the British classical political economists." These errors could easily be forgiven him if the secretary of the Communist Party did not, at the conclusion of his adventure, bring out with him a knapsack full of new heroes. That they are the heroes of yesterday's petty bourgeoisie and not of the working classes Mr. Browder does not seem to have realized.

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The study of the past for the Marxist has an important theoretical and political significance. In the broader sense, the history of mankind's struggles indicates that progress has been achieved dialectically: we have gone ahead, compelled at crucial moments to utilize the instrument of revolution, because we have succeeded in transforming decaying social organisms into new ones healthy and fresh with young life. In our own past the War of Independence and the Civil War were such turning-points; and in each instance a suppressed class seized power, gave the economic life a changed direction, and molded the political and legal institutions to fit its own purposes. This is our revolutionary tradition.

But the triumphant leaders of the revolutionary crises of the past are not the heroes of those who will be in the van of tomorrow's struggles. In the first American revolution the upper and lower middle classes were compelled to smash the chains that bound them to English mercantilism; in the second, the stranglehold of the slave system had to be broken before capitalism was completely free to perform its historical mission. In both these movements the working classes as such participated obscurely. True, the workers of today and tomorrow must learn from example. But their heroes and their slogans are their own and not those of another class; their inspiration springs from the lives and deeds of the Sylvises, Debses, and Haywoods who fought against capitalist oppression even before their challenge for power had any hope for success.

Mr. Browder, it would seem, wants to forget this. For in an effort to win new friends to the cause of communism to take the place of those he seems irretrievably to have lost he appeals for guidance to the petty-bourgeois leaders of a past in American history that is completely closed. Mr. Browder quotes with approval Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Walt Whitman, and Milo Reno! Even his vocabulary has become lower middle class. Thus: the new fascists are "carrying on a campaign against everything that is *liberal* or *progressive* in the country"; and "it is high time the *progressive* forces of the United States . . ."; and "the nine gray-bearded vestal virgins who guard the altar of private property slammed the door of *constitutional law* against social legislation and government intervention in economic questions." (Italics mine.)

The hand of friendship is held out beseechingly to the Townsendites, the Longites, and the Epic Planners; these are to be welcomed into the ranks, as Father Divine, Milo Reno, and Governor Olson already have been made welcome. Party work for the purpose of radicalizing the workers and the submerged lower middle classes apparently is to be abandoned: the Trade Union Unity League is gone, but the Trade Union Educational League is not to be revived; the Agricultural and Cannery Workers' Industrial Union may die; the United Farmers' League is to be liquidated. Communists are to forget about the workers, the agricultural laborers, the bankrupt small farmers, and that communism has been a revolutionary faith, that power can be won only through the workers, that the middle classes are their enemies, that the road to socialist victory is through the dictatorship of the proletariat, and that imperialist war must be converted into civil war.

There is a dimly conceived plan behind all this bewilderment, obviously. The immediate enemies are fascism and war, and therefore all of us are first to rally to the defense of democratic institutions; the class struggle can wait. Mr. Browder, however, never defines fascism in any exact sense. Last year the New Deal was fascist; a half-year ago the Longs and the Coughlins were the fascists; today the fascists are the Repub-

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lican Party and the American Liberty League. And we are to prepare ourselves for immediate mortal combat by creating a farmer-labor party which flies Populist banners and is captained by the owning commercial farmers of the Middle West and Northwest!

But if this is the worst kind of confusion, what are we to think of Mr. Browder on the war question? Communists are to take leadership in fighting the imminent peril of war in this way:

> We must explain that the only way to fight seriously against war is by the independent action of the toilers against the war-makers, using this action at the same time for pressure on the League of Nations and Roosevelt government, in favor of measures for peace and for cooperation with the Soviet Union.

What can this mean? Mr. Browder is opposed to isolation and regards the League of Nations with suspicion; he is contemptuous of the neutrality legislation of the Roosevelt Administration. He will have nothing to do with governments and super-governments. How, then, are we going to achieve a militant peace program that will not be pacifist on the one hand and that, if war does break out, will still make realizable the conversion of the imperialist war into civil war? We are to cooperate with the Soviet Union. But does Mr. Browder mean a formal defensive and offensive pact? And if we enter into war on the side of the U. S. S. R. what shall be done about the American civil war that will free the workers from their class chains? Mr. Browder does not say, as he does not about so many other vexing questions. It is difficult to see how the secretary of the Communist Party has been helped by his recent study of American history. LOUIS M. HACKER

Shorter Notices

THE YANKEE BODLEYS. By Naomi Lane Babson. Reynal and Hitchcock. $2.50.

Novelists have often enough been told by helpful critics that the great novels are of large scope, include many characters, and cover a considerable period of time. It does not follow, of course, that a novelist who is faithful to this description necessarily writes a great novel. Miss Babson, who has covered three generations in time and has occupied herself with the doings of a family of seven with their sons and grandsons, has written merely a pleasant and sensible one. The seven Bodley children and their parents live in Massachusetts; they experience the usual emotions of mankind—love, hate, jealousy, grief, joy, and despair. They grow up, marry, and some of them have children; the husband of one sister dies and leaves her desolate; the husband of another dies and leaves her happily free. Certain of the earlier situations are moving and tender; toward the end the second and third generations get to seem like strangers. The great pattern is not here, although this is more than an amiable first novel.

UNCOMMON PEOPLE. By Helen Hull. Coward-McCann. $2.50.

The "uncommon people" depicted in this volume of short stories are not at all uncommon except in the special sense in which Miss Hull has used the term. D. H. Lawrence once, when accused of picturing abnormal types in his novels, people who were not "true to life," replied that it was astounding when you stopped to think about it how many queer and extraordinary human beings there were in England. One would not draw that conclusion concerning the people of America from reading this volume. In fact, the characters in it are the very unretouched tintypes of our recognizable neighbors and ourselves, from the small-town family to the city commuter. What Miss Hull has done is to penetrate beneath the surface of commonplace lives to discover the drama which is often hidden there. Nevertheless, one cannot but feel at times that the talents of the writer are cramped by the requirements of the magazine story. Her ability to enter into a point of view and an experience not her own appears to admirable advantage in Waiting and in Mainstay, but in neither of these stories is the ending quite convincing.

THE MANCHU ABDICATION AND THE POWERS, 1908-1912. By John Gilbert Reid. University of California Press. $5.

This thoroughly documented study of the international rivalries in China which preceded the Manchu abdication in 1912 is significant for its detailed revelation of pre-war diplomatic alignments in the Far East. Then as now China was the pawn in the game, but the ultimate stakes were much larger, more ramified and far-reaching. The last Manchu emperor, reigning from 1908 to 1912 as Hsüan-T'ung but better known today as P'u-Yi, was historically doomed to be a puppet pulled by foreign strings. At that time he was an international puppet; today he is a Japanese puppet, used to serve Japan's continental ambitions. His present role of titular Emperor of Manchoukuo and the diplomatic possibilities for future Japanese expansion in China connected with it acquire new meaning in the light of this historical analysis of his "boy-emperor" days.

VIGILS. By Siegfried Sassoon. The Viking Press. $1.50.

If at fifty Mr. Sassoon regards his first childhood with a kind of nostalgia, the poems he has assembled in "Vigils" have for the most part an economy of phrase sufficient to redeem them from the worst pitfalls of the subject matter. But individually they have no unity and no variations of rhythm, so that it is impossible from internal evidence to distinguish where one ends and another begins. "Allow me now much musing-space to shape my secrecies alone," the poet says, and his musings take the shape of mildly sorrowful memories plus an occasional cosmic gem in language strongly reminiscent of the rugged philosophizing in Thomas Hardy's poetry: "Degrees of groping thought have taught me to conclude . . ."; "having grown world-wise through harshly unlearned illusion." The best poems are those with least "message," like The Gains of Good and An Emblem. The rest read like poems about poems; the reader feels that Mr. Sassoon has described his emotions rather than given them expression in words. Of simple feeling newly expressed or of subtle feeling simply expressed there is none. Poetry so plainly devoid of felt rhythms must be considered platitudinous, and it is fortunate that Mr. Sassoon deals in platitudes that bear repetition.

THE LOST GENERATION. By Maxine Davis. The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

The tragic plight of the depression generation and the necessity of a comprehensive youth-assistance program are made abundantly evident by this study based upon four months of travel and investigation. Unfortunately, however, Miss Davis seems to have made no great effort to gauge the magnitude of youth's problems, to get the facts, to get them accurately, or to view the scene with scientific objectivity. For some inexplicable reason—possibly her connection with the Republican *Wash-*

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ington Post is explanation enough—she minimizes matters, stating, for example, that there are only three million jobless young people; this though she is aware that Aubrey Williams, executive director of the National Youth Administration, has authoritatively put the figure at between five and eight million. Some three million young people between sixteen and twenty-five years of age have been on relief according to widely publicized FERA figures, but this fact Miss Davis disregards. She emphatically insists that the present generation is basically true-blue American old style, and goes so far from the facts as to aver that "even at Columbia University . . . we find no influential radical group." The innumerable instances of contrary evidence, including the revolt of youth on the campus, in the church, and in the factory, are blandly ignored. To Miss Davis one of the happy signs on the American campus is the fact that the sons of the rich no longer publicly display their Rolls Royces and Pierce Arrows. The CCC camps are not in the least bit militaristic, let Assistant Secretary of War Woodring indiscreetly say what he will to the contrary. The NYA isn't any good because, among other complaints, "youth doesn't want to serve youth in this country." Inaccuracies are not infrequent; George Soule, for example, is referred to as George Soule, Jr., and as George H. Soule. Yet for all its faults the book will serve a splendid purpose if it helps to focus public attention on the young casualties of America Incorporated.

RECORDS

ON ALL sides organizations are springing up to give recitals of phonograph music. The American Gramophonic Society, 50 West Sixty-seventh Street, New York, will complete a three months' cycle of thirty-six concerts when they give the Bach B minor Mass complete on April 25. Their programs have been divided into three series, twelve concerts each, devoted to orchestral works, chamber music, and Bach. The concerts provide music, especially chamber music, under the most favorable conditions, the studio seating not more than thirty. Prices are kept at thirty-five cents a concert, with reductions for subscriptions. Apparently the series has been a success, for another is planned for the fall. I. Katell, of 44 Bennett Avenue, New York, who is engaged in a similar enterprise, gives concerts once a week and is planning a more ambitious program for the Mohegan Colony this summer and again for New York in the fall; and a group headed by Philip Glaberman, 1450 Broadway, is projecting concerts of gramophone music for towns that have no concert series of their own.

Meanwhile the Richard Wagner Society, 54 West 104th Street, is also featuring recorded programs. The latest addition is, of course, the much-heralded Act I of "Die Walküre," recorded by Victor with Lotte Lehmann, Lauritz Melchior, Emanuel List, and the Vienna Philharmonic under Bruno Walter (eight records, $16). It is the finest of the more ambitious grand-opera undertakings, and the set leaves little to be desired. Exception might be taken to some slight echoes that sound as if the recording had been done in an empty auditorium of some size; to certain cuts, probably inevitable if the set was to be kept at a reasonable price; to Mme. Lehmann's failure to rise to the intense dramatic heights achieved by Göta Ljungberg in an earlier but on the whole less successful

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Victor recording of "Die Walküre" (fourteen records, $21); and to a lack of brilliance in the closing orchestral passages. But the singing of Mr. Melchior, especially in the narrative, of Mme. Lehmann in the quieter sections, and of Mr. List throughout is so dramatically conceived, so well articulated with the dynamics of the orchestra, that the above considerations should deter no one from adding the album to his collection. For once the singers do not shout it out in a death grapple with the eloquent accompaniment.

To replace an older recording by the Leners, Columbia has issued Beethoven's opus 95 Quartet in F minor played by the Roth String Quartet (three records, $5). For Mozart and Haydn there is perhaps no better quartet than the Roths—see, for example, their recent recordings of the Haydn F minor, opus 20, no. 5, and the Mozart A major, K-464 (each, three records, $5). Their performance of the later Beethoven, however, is not so heroic as that of the Leners, though better recorded and, as always, played with perfect balance and exquisite phrasing. You will find no better example of string-quartet virtuosity than the Roths' rendition of the ticklish coda of the last movement.

Victor's contribution to chamber music this month is the Pro Arte Quartet's impeccable rendition of the Schubert C major Quintet with the assistance of Anthony Pini (five records, $10). It is so impeccable, in fact, that one feels that the gentlemen sat down to the first movement with the comment, "Now we will give you the *definitive* version." The result is a loss of some of the careless verve that marked the playing of this composition by the London String Quartet some years ago for Columbia (six records, $9). In every other respect, however, the Pro Arte album is the better. And as for the recording—you can hear the pages being turned toward the end of the fifth side.

Among the finer single discs the following vocal records are recommended: Alexander Kipnis's two Mozart arias, one each from "Die Zauberflöte" and "Die Entführung aus dem Serail" (Victor, $1.50); John McCormack's two Hugo Wolff *Lieder*, "Herr, was trägt der Boden hier" and "Auch kleine Dinge können" (Victor, $1.50); five Russian numbers by the Don Cossack Choir (Columbia, $1.50); and three Negro spirituals by Marian Anderson (Victor, $2). We trust that Victor will see its way to letting Miss Anderson record *Lieder* as well as spirituals—which is not a complaint, but just greed. And just to show that we are not pleased by everything, let us warn you away from Albert Spalding's two inconsequential encore bits, "Burlesca" by Suk and "Cortège" by Lili Boulanger (Victor, $1.50), and from Efrem Zimbalist's "Zigeunerweisen" by Sarasate, which is not Zimbalist at his best (Columbia, $1.50).

HENRY SIMON

TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER—THE CHILD!

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Joseph Wood Krutch says:

CALL IT A DAY. Morosco Theater. Gay and delightful comedy about what almost happened to an English family on the first dangerous day of spring.

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SAINT JOAN. Martin Beck Theater. Brilliant interpretation by Katharine Cornell of what may well be Shaw's most enduring play.

END OF SUMMER. Guild Theater. The wittiest of American playwrights sets a group of interesting people to talking about the world as we find it. Ina Claire and Osgood Perkins help make a very happy evening.

ETHAN FROME. National Theater. The apparently impossible task of dramatization of Edith Wharton's novel achieved with conspicuous success. Outstanding performances by Pauline Lord, Ruth Gordon, and Raymond Massey.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE. Plymouth Theater. Amazingly successful adaptation, brilliantly staged and acted. A thoroughly delightful evening in the theater.

VICTORIA REGINA. Broadhurst Theater. Delightful series of scenes from Laurence Housman's drama stunningly acted by Helen Hayes and others. Fairer to the matron queen than Strachey but funny nevertheless and charming besides.

Mark Van Doren says:

AH, WILDERNESS. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Eugene O'Neill's touching and searching comedy of high-school days translated into a film which charms by its own right. Full of recognitions for the middle-aged.

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The Marx Brothers in their best picture to date. Hilarious and brilliant.

MODERN TIMES. Charles Chaplin. Charlie Chaplin returns to the screen disguised as his old self and fulfils every expectation. Should be seen by everyone—and heard, for he has sound effects.

THE GHOST GOES WEST. Gaumont British. René Clair's first film in English, with scenes in Scotland and the United States. Clever, satirical, and fanciful, but without the master touch.

THE PRISONER OF SHARK ISLAND. Fox. Tells the story of Dr. Mudd, convicted in 1865 of having helped Booth to escape. Somber and powerful; does not spare the spectator.

DUBROVSKY. Amkino. As romantic as Pushkin, on whose unfinished novel it is based. Not wholly successful, but interesting as a variation on the orthodox Russian theme.

THE STORY OF LOUIS PASTEUR. Warner Brothers. With Paul Muni as Pasteur this film makes "science" exciting, or at any rate uses the life of its hero to excellent dramatic advantage.

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Letters to the Editors

A TEST OF LIBERALISM

Dear Sirs: Are dictatorships always bad and the maintenance of civil liberties and the rights of individuals always good? Or does it depend on the circumstances in each case?

There are still a considerable number of people who maintain that dictatorship is always bad. But Roger N. Baldwin, director of the American Civil Liberties Union and staunch defender of the rights of minorities, startled the world in 1928 by making a distinction. There are dictatorships and dictatorships, said he in Liberty Under the Soviets, and the Russian Soviet dictatorship, in contrast to all others, is "a moving, progressive organism," exercising a control "responsive to pressure from the forces at its base."

There are also people who maintain that invasion of the supposed rights of private individuals and groups is always bad. An excellent test of this position is furnished by the recent seizure of telegraphic records by the Black committee of the United States Senate. Roger Baldwin and the American Civil Liberties Union viewed with alarm the committee's actions, as did also the American Liberty League. But *The Nation* in its issue of this date commends the committee. "The essential question to ask is what the temper of the investigating committee is, and what objectives it is aiming at."

Isn't it time that we had a restatement of the liberal position (if there is such a thing) in terms a little more related to the actual forces at work in the world today? HORACE B. DAVIS

Bradford, Mass., April 1

NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL POLICY

Dear Sirs: Your comments in *The Nation* for March 25 about the report of the Committee on National Industrial Policy were, I hope, made after reading one or more of the characteristically poor summaries in the New York daily papers and not after a study of the report itself.

I wish to quote briefly from the report which you say introduces necessary proposals with "fear and trembling" and shows that "our business executives seem to have forgotten nothing and learned nothing since the beginning of the depression."

> It must be clear that our present economic ills are attributable to the maldistribution and unwise use of the national income; that surplus production and unemployment arise chiefly, if not solely, from the diversion of too great a portion of the national income from the consuming market into the investment field, working injury to capital, to labor, to management and to the general public by depriving people of buying power, by depriving workers of the opportunity to produce needed goods, by depriving management of production and marketing opportunities, and by causing production facilities to become unusable, destroying their capital value almost in exact proportion to their non-use.

Is this concise statement of our present predicament, as you have suggested, "proof of the bankruptcy of economic thought on the part of our business leaders"?

What you have termed "a dangerous tendency toward a semi-fascist set-up" was a proposal for the establishment of a permanent advisory council with a "purely advisory function." It was the expressed conviction of the committee that "as an intelligent and representative adviser such a council will have more influence and find more general acceptance than in any other role."

PAUL GARRISON

Scarsdale, N. Y., March 29

PROSTITUTION—"IN A NICE WAY"

Dear Sirs: I often wonder what naive persons write such editorials for you as the one on Prostitution in New York City. Certainly they appear to write from second- or third-hand information. To a certain limited extent it is perhaps true that prostitution is an economic problem and to that extent it should have such regulation and treatment as is accorded it in Soviet Russia. On the other hand, I think you will agree that the most recent general raid in New York City, which your editorial so signally neglects to mention, was the most interesting to date because it was predicated upon strict economic doctrine. No effort was made to convict anyone of moral turpitude. The point that bothered the authorities was the fact that an organized big-business ring was exploiting the girls economically in such manner as to prevent them from collecting the due fruits of their conscientious industry. Girls who were taking in from $150 to $300 weekly—and such a take is far more common than the low scab prices you mention in your editorial—were being paid but $35 to $50 weekly for their industrious application to their chosen profession. That the authorities held was altogether wrong and should be amended.

But the point you overlook is that great numbers of interesting, attractive, and highly intelligent women voluntarily enter this profession even when other avenues of artistic expression and economic reward are open to them. A few of them, it is true, are nymphomaniacs, but only a rare few. You will always have quite a number of women who are perfectly intelligent and of full mental stature, but who simply prefer to prostitute themselves, in a nice way of course, and it is too much to expect men to resist their ethical complacency. It is simply naive to place prostitution entirely upon an economic basis. It is more than naive for anyone to write an editorial like yours on the assumption that New York prostitutes are weak, idiotic, filthy, infected, and degraded. Some of them are. They would be, regardless of what profession they followed. But this general indictment is an insult to the professional standing of a very considerable number of fine women in the oldest profession, who fill a social need, and who are in a position to resent this stigma upon their excellent characters. T. SWANN HARDING

Washington, March 20

A LETTER FROM WALTER BAER

Dear Sirs: Thank you very much for your publicizing of my case. The results thereof have been and are still making themselves felt. I just now received a letter from a woman who used to go to a little country school with me, and from whom I've never heard for some twenty years. She too has sent a protest to Secretary Perkins, and expressed her disgust with the unjust application of the law.

For your information, the Supreme

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Court of the state of Oregon has just rendered a decision validating the $6,000,000 bond issue which was voted by the citizens of Portland on the plans I submitted gratis to the City Council, and has stipulated that the construction of the proposed sewage-treatment works must "substantially" follow "the Baer plan." This action, which was entirely unexpected by any of us, certainly vindicates me to the last degree, and makes me very happy indeed. However, actual construction will be hampered by the continued activities of the reactionary elements for a long time. These same elements have, I suspect, already intervened in my appeal to the extent of prevailing on the United States District Attorney to demand an exorbitant bail for my release pending our filed appeal.

I want to thank you, too, for your kindness in helping to brighten my incarceration with a free subscription for *The Nation*. I appreciate it, as do my confreres, Alfred Miller, Fred Werrmann, Domenick Sallitto, and Vincent Ferrero. The last two boys expect to leave here on bail of $1,000 each tonight or tomorrow. Miller may go out as soon as his $1,000 bond is raised, and Werrmann is awaiting the outcome of an application to enter Mexico, under the right of political asylum, a right evidently unknown in this country, more's the pity.

WALTER E. BAER

Ellis Island, New York, April 3

U. S. S. R. AND WPA

Dear Sirs: The Massachusetts WPA Adult Recreation Project recently scheduled two talks in Boston upon the U. S. S. R. The speaker, who was serving without compensation, is a descendant of Revolutionary soldiers, of a major general in the United States army, and of a member of Congress, and is not a Communist. The first meeting, one of an international-relations series, upon the topic "Russia's Contribution to Civilization," was canceled because in that entire section of the city, strangely, not a single available hall could be discovered. The second talk, upon "Glimpsing Russia in Forty Days," was canceled because the WPA found itself unable to provide automobile transportation from one section of Boston to another—in spite of the fact that the speaker offered to provide the automobile.

The United States government may have recognized Russia, but the WPA of Massachusetts has not.

MARY ELIZABETH SANGER

Boston, March 31

A FREE PRESS

Dear Sirs: There is general approval of the decision of the United States Supreme Court on the freedom of the press. Contrast this with the complete muzzling of the press in India under British rule. Every Indian newspaper must deposit with the government a large sum of money, to be forfeited if it publishes anything that the government regards as objectionable. At first this was represented as merely temporary, an emergency measure. Lately the government has sought to incorporate it in the permanent law. The legislative assembly refused to make it permanent. Then the British viceroy enacted it into a permanent law, over their heads.

ALICE STONE BLACKWELL

Boston, March 6

VETERANS OF FUTURE BONUSES

Dear Sirs: We write to correct some widespread misapprehensions about the Veterans of Future Wars. It seems to be generally believed that this great cause enlists only college students. Since war does not discriminate in choosing its victims, why should we? We welcome into our ranks all men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-six; the Home Fire Auxiliary for future wives and mothers of future veterans is open to all women between the ages of one and 115.

More serious, perhaps, is the unworthy imputation that our chief purpose is to tweak the guilty consciences of veterans of past wars. Emphatically, we insist that their guilty consciences have nothing to fear from us. On the contrary, it is because we believe with them that dead men enjoy no bonuses that we want ours before most of us are killed.

CHARLES BERLINRUT,
Commander, Washington-Jefferson-Lincoln-Roosevelt Post

Newark, April 2

CORRECTION

[The letter entitled Supreme Court Justices, which appeared in last week's Letters to the Editors and which was signed Irving D. Hard, was from Irving Dilliard.—Editors The Nation.]

INFORMATION FOR SUBSCRIBERS

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CONTRIBUTORS

LION FEUCHTWANGER, one of the company of distinguished German writers exiled from their fatherland, is now living in France. He has written many novels, the best known of which are probably "Jew Süss," "Josephus," "The Oppermanns," and "The Jew of Rome."

LILLIAN SYMES, with her husband, Travers Clement, is the author of "Rebel America." Miss Symes carried on the Consumers' League investigation of candy factories in 1926, in the course of which she worked in sixteen different factories. Out of the investigation grew the manufacturers' "white list," which was widely publicized. Miss Symes's article on California politics will be followed by a study of the Northwest, with particular reference to the Townsend movement and to Senator Borah, by Richard Neuberger, whose earlier Townsend article in *The Nation* was quoted all over the country.

T. A. BISSON, expert on the Far East on the staff of the Foreign Policy Association, lived in China for four years. He has lately written an F. P. A. pamphlet, "Outer Mongolia, A New Danger Zone in the Far East."

WILLIAM TROY, formerly film critic for *The Nation,* is in the English Department at Bennington College.

CHARLES HUDEBURG was a contributor to "Trial Balances," Ann Winslow's admirable anthology of the work of young poets.

ABRAM L. HARRIS, professor of economics at Howard University, is coauthor with Sterling Spero of "The Black Worker," and author of "The Negro as Capitalist," soon to be published. He has just received a Guggenheim fellowship for a continuation of his studies of the economic systems of Karl Marx and Veblen.

PHILIP BLAIR RICE regularly reviews poetry for *The Nation.*

ELISEO VIVAS, member of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Wisconsin, has been closely connected with the work of the Experimental College there.

LOUIS M. HACKER, author of "A Short History of the New Deal," was a member of the editorial staff of the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences. He is now lecturer in economics at Columbia.

GEORGES SCHREIBER continues his disconcerting portraits of our statesmen, drawn from life and on the spot.

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